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### Contents

J. W. BURROW	Peter Gay: <i>The Bourgeois Experience - Victoria to Freud, Volume 1, Education of the Senses</i> 907
PETER REDGROVE COLIN SEYMOUR-URE	The Henri (poem) 907
E. S. TURNER	Montague Kern: <i>Patrie</i> W. Levering and Ralph B. Levering: <i>The Kennedy Crisis - The press, the presidency and foreign policy</i> 908
JAMES DEAKIN	Neil A. Grauer: <i>Wits and Sages</i> 908
PAUL SMITH	Joseph C. Spear: <i>Presidents and the Press - The Nixon legacy</i> 908
ANTHONY QUINTON	Jeffrey Richards: <i>The Age of the Dream Palace - Cinema and society in Britain 1930-1939</i> 909
DAVID BROMWICH	Wiley Lee Umphlett: <i>The Movies Go to College - Hollywood and the world of the college-life film</i> 910
NIGEL WHEALE	Alexander W. Allison, Herbert Barrows, Caesar R. Blake, Anwar, Carr, Arthur M. Eastman and Hubert M. English Jr (Editors): <i>The Norton Anthology of Poetry</i> 911
VERNON BOGDANOR	Larry Smith: <i>Lawrence Ferlinghetti - Poet-at-large</i> 911
KEITH ROBBINS	Francis Pynn: <i>The Politics of Consent</i>
C. M. WOODHOUSE	Bruce Arnold: <i>Margaret Thatcher - A study in power</i> 912
J. P. KENYON	John Ramsden (Editor): <i>Real Old Tory Politics - The political diaries of Robert Sanders, Lord Bynford 1910-1935</i> 912
MICHAEL MALLET	Harold Macmillan: <i>War Diaries - Politics and war in the Mediterranean, January 1943-May 1945</i> 912
GEORGE HOLMES	Robin Clifton: <i>The Last Popular Rebellion - The Western Rising of 1685</i> 913
MARION LOMAX	Judith Hook: <i>Lorenzo de' Medici - An historical biography</i> 914
JOHN FAIRLEIGH	Charles T. Davis: <i>Dante's Italy and other essays</i> 914
ERICK KORN	Guardians (poem) 914
CLANCYSIGAL	Laurel Taylor: <i>In the Underworld</i> 915
PHILIP PETERS	John Treharne: <i>The Strange History of Bonnie and Clyde</i> 915
PIA PERA	Joe McGinnis: <i>Fatal Vision</i>
ROGER WARREN	Jack Olsen: <i>"Son" - A psychopath and his victims</i> 915
RICHARD COMBS	Viewpoint: <i>The State of Poland</i> 916
SARAH BRADFORD	Letters on The Kensington Rune Stone, Editing 'Ulysses', 'Sir John Did His Duty', etc 917-8
RONALD HINGLEY	Commentary
JANE GRAYSON	Charles Wood: <i>Red Star (The Pit, Barbican)</i> 918
C. R. PIKE	William Congreve: <i>The Way of the World (Festival Theatre, Chichester)</i> 918
WALTER LAQUEUR	<i>Broadway Danny Rose (Various cinemas)</i> 919
NAOMI MILLER	Sale of illuminated miniatures 919
IAN BOYD WHITE	Author, Author 919
PAUL HAMILTON	Among this week's contributors 919
J. E. J. ALTHAM	Joseph Frank: <i>Dostoevsky - The years of ordeal 1850-1859</i>
GRAHAM BRADSHAW	Fyodor Dostoevsky: <i>The Village of Stepanukovo</i> 920
DENTON FOX	John Garryard (Editor): <i>The Russian Novel from Pushkin to Pasternak</i> 920
DAVID NOKES	Marcus Wheeler (Editor): <i>The Oxford Russian-English Dictionary</i>
DOMINIC HIBBERD	Elizabeth A. M. Wilson: <i>The Modern Russian Dictionary for English Speakers - English-Russian</i>
SEAN FRENCH	P. S. Falla (Editor): <i>The Oxford English-Russian Dictionary</i> 920
S. S. PRAWER	Theodor Eichenburg: <i>Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - Band 1, Jahre der Benennung 1945-1949</i>
	Hans-Peter Schwartz: <i>Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - Band 2 und 3, Die Ära Adenauer</i>
	Wolfgang Benz (Editor): <i>Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland - Ralf Steingard (Editor): Deutsche Geschichte 1945-1961</i> 921
	William Howard Adams: <i>Jefferson's Monticello</i> 922
	Wim de Wit (Editor): <i>The Amsterdam School - Dutch Expressionist architecture 1913-1930</i> 922
	Christopher Norris: <i>The Deconstructive Turn - Essays in the rhetoric of philosophy</i> 923
	John Finnis: <i>Fundamentals of Ethics</i>
	Michael Slater: <i>Goods and Virtues</i> 923
	The schoolman's hard questions (poem) 923
	Jonathan Dollimore: <i>Ridiculous Tragedy - Religion, ideology and power in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries</i> 924
	James Craigie and Alexander Law (Editors): <i>Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I</i> 924
	A. D. Nuttall: <i>Pope's Essay on Man</i> 925
	Desmond Graham: <i>The Truth of War - Owen, Blunden and Rosenberg</i> 925
	Carlos Baker: <i>The Echoing Green - Romanticism, Modernism, and the phenomenon of transference in poetry</i> 925
	Valerie Shaw: <i>The Short Story - A critical introduction</i>
	V. S. Pritchett: <i>The Other Side of the Frontier - A. V. S. Pritchett reads Collected Stories</i> 926
	Anton Chekhov: <i>The Tales - Volume 1, The Darling and other stories, Volume 2, The Duel and other stories</i> 926
	Paperbacks: 927
	Index of books reviewed 927
	Crossword 928

Cover picture

A detail from Matthias Grünewald's 'St Lawrence' in the Stadelmann Kunstmuseum, Frankfurt-am-Main, reproduced in Wilhelm Fraenger's *Grünewald* (354pp. Munich: C. H. Beck. DM 198. 3406 09739 5)

## Sex and the middle classes

J. W. Burrow

PETER GAY  
*The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*  
Volume 1: Education of the Senses  
534pp. Oxford University Press. £18.50.  
0195033523

Peter Gay would admit to being a historian of large ambition. Many scholars would be more than content, in his place, to see his magisterial two-volume study of the Enlightenment as the centrepiece of their oeuvre, surrounded as it is by an impressive list of other titles indicating the range of his interests, especially in the German culture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Assuming that the vast project he has now undertaken, of which the present book is merely the first instalment, comes to fruition, we may come to regard his other works in the light of an elaborate preamble. The general theme of the new project is the nineteenth-century "bourgeois experience", seen as comprehensively as possible, and the informing idea is Freudian psychoanalysis. "I have constructed my volumes", he tells us, "on the fundamental building blocks of the human experience - love, aggression, and conflict". Accordingly we begin with sex; this first volume, large though it is, is insufficient to contain the bourgeois libido, and a second will follow. Later volumes (the plural is emphatic), on aggression, will include not merely overt hostility, but all the devices of mastery and control: technology, political and aesthetic forms, science and history. The concluding volumes will deal with conflict, especially, it seems, the complex relationship, touched on in the present volume, between the bourgeoisie and its self-appointed critics, the avant-garde.

It is not only the scale of the proposed enterprise which may raise an eyebrow or two among scholars of a more monographic bent. Professor Gay does not altogether care for the term "psycho-history" with its reductionist implications, and he is sharply critical of some of its professors, but his own invocation of Freud as his project's presiding genius will inevitably be contentious. As Gay puts it, "my aim is to integrate psychoanalysis with history. These volumes, then, are not psychohistory; they are history informed by psychoanalysis. There is a difference." What Gay sees as the contribution of psychoanalysis is "the analytical leap from the unselfish contents of my evidence to its latent meanings".

This last formulation may strike many historians less as a Freudian manifesto than as a description of the difference between good history and bad. Gay knows this argument well, of course, and in part admits its validity, which makes his statement of his psychoanalytic credo the more impressive. It is understandable insisting to the Freudian or Marxist historian, conscious of the possession of a distinctive framework of explanation, to be told that we are all Freudians/Marxists now. Certainly, while admitting the importance of Freudian ways of thinking to Gay himself in conceiving his project, and recognizing too the aid that he often gets from psychoanalysis in interpreting the diaries and letters he has used so extensively, one can see many of his book's virtues, its learning and humanity and even some of its insights, as in principle separable from its psychoanalytic allegiance.

He puts the question "Was there a distinctive bourgeois style in sexuality?" His own answer, so far, is less evident than his justified hostility to the clichés which have been offered by others. His book begins, in fact, with an entirely traditional - which is not to say unorthodox - historian's enterprise: revisionism. He writes in part to correct oversimplified stereotypes of nineteenth-century bourgeois sexuality, and in doing so makes it seem a good deal less peculiar. As he says, his aim here is "to complicate and correct those tenuous misconceptions that have dogged our reading of Victorian culture as a devious and insincere world in which middle-class husbands slaked their lust by keeping mistresses, frequenting prostitutes, or molesting children, while their wives were sexually anaesthetic and poured all their capacity for love into their housekeeping and their child-rearing". He

exceptionally frank nineteenth-century bourgeois and bourgeois he does.

His chief heroine is Mabel Loomis Todd, conscientious diarist, affectionate and sensual wife, enthusiastic adulteress and Regent of the Amherst chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. One of the most attractive features of Gay's book is his use of letters and diaries. One's confidence in him as their interpreter is won by a not over-emphatic use of such distinctively Freudian devices as attempted dream interpretations, or the gentle detection of symbolic substitutions or the suppressed wish in the too vehement protest, but still more by his own calm equability and tolerance. It is, in fact, a literary feat which deserves recognition. Sexual enjoyment notoriously defeats our attempts to record it (even the pallid word "enjoyment" represents a choice among variously biased possibilities with which I am not very happy); distanced from us, as these records are, by the idiom of another - and in this respect even less articulate - age, and never intended for our eyes, they must necessarily often seem coyly infantile or gushily uplifted. Gay's treatment of these intimate outpourings is admirably judged, with just the right amount of complicity to avoid being clinical or ironically smart, but equally avoiding sentimentality or vicarious excitement.

Mabel Todd is the attractively dishevelled heroine leading Gay's bourgeois across the

barricades of sexual anaesthesia, but she has a number of companions from similar backgrounds: Lester Ward, the American sociologist, and his wife; Godfrey Lowell Cabot and his wife Minnie; and Joseph and Laura Lyman. And, of course, there is the remarkable survey, known to historians for some years now, of the sexual responses of educated American women conducted in the 1890s by Clara Duel Mosher. They were, of course, a selected group, by nationality, education, class and cooperativeness, but their replies were frank and in general enthusiastic enough to make it clear that for most of these nineteenth-century American wives there was much more to sexual experience than closing one's eyes and thinking of Manifest Destiny.

There was, of course, one inescapable physical reality which, in fact or in anticipation, for much of the nineteenth century clouded even the most guilt-free enjoyment of sex with fear, pain and often death: childbirth, child death and puerperal fever. To read accounts of nineteenth-century childbirths before the advent of anaesthetics, and to be reminded of the individual experiences covered by the mortality rates for children and mothers, which made childbearing into a species of Russian roulette for both, is to wonder at the tenacity of the sexual impulse and to pity the species held so mercilessly in its grip: it gives another meaning to Hegel's phrase "the slaughter-

bench of history". But here the new technological mastery of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie began to make its experience historically distinctive, though with a characteristic accompanying anxiety. It is hard to imagine Marx and Engels celebrating the vulgarizing of rubber and its application to contraception among the world-transforming historical achievements of the bourgeoisie celebrated in the *Communist Manifesto* (in fact Marxists were generally surlily conservative about birth control) but in retrospect it looks more impressive and far-reaching than the most spectacular engineering feats of the age.

It is difficult not to become a celebratory Whig historian when speaking of birth control, yet in the nineteenth century it was often greeted as an atrocious symptom of decadence and inevitable decline. The over-heated national rivalries of the age, the Social Darwinist doctrines of racial competition and the eugenicists' fears for middle-class virtues swamped by the uncontrolled fertility of the poor, all contributed to hysterical denunciations of sexuality divorced from procreation, as they did also to the terrors produced by the educated and emancipated New Women. As always in the nineteenth century, the medical men were at hand to reinforce cultural anxiety with psychological terrorism. The effects of "conjugal onanism", according to one authority, produced in women "metritis (both acute and chronic), leucorrhoea, menorrhagia haematocoele, fibrous tumours, polyps; hyperaesthesia, colics, neuroses and cancer in the uterus; hysteria, neuralgia, mammary congestion, disease of the ovaries, and sterility".

But even the hysteria aroused by birth control was outdone by the panic produced in the nineteenth-century medical mind by masturbation. Here, once again, rather than forms of sexual behaviour as such, which we may still plausibly think of as relatively invariant, we have a set of attitudes highly distinctive of a class and period, which cry out for explanation. The onanism panic, which, with roots in the eighteenth century, spread across bourgeois Europe in the nineteenth, and then abated, reminds one most of the epidemic of witch-trials in the early modern period. The doom of the masturbator haunted generations. Apart from insanity it could also, it seemed, cause "seminal weakness, impotence, dysuria, tabes dorsalis, pulmonary consumption, dyspepsia, dimness of sight, vertigo, epilepsy, hypochondria, loss of memory, mania, fatuity, and death". Again one is driven to wonder, this time with admiration, at the immense resilience of the human sexual impulse. Even technology, it was maintained, played its part in arousing the old Eve (in this case); bicycles one might have predicted as culprits, but it comes more of a surprise to find sewing machines indicted.

It is one of the merits of Gay's book that, just as he avoids twentieth-century smugness and condescension, he also makes no scapegoats. All of us are more or less victims, and even the nineteenth-century medical profession is not outside the pale of the historian's sympathy: they too had their historical predicament and its pressures and anxieties. Occasionally he allows himself an elegant understated irony, and once a judgment, terrible in its uniqueness and economy: referring to the exclusion of the clitoris of a seven-year-old girl to "cure" her masturbation, in 1894 in Cleveland, Ohio, he adds "let the historian record that the presiding surgeon was Dr Alvin Eyer".

It is in the nature of hysteria and atrocity that it seems to outrun the sober explanations offered by the historian: justification, Gay might say, of the need for the perspectives of psychoanalysis. But we cannot, of course, in writing history expect anything like the precision and the symmetry of psychoanalytic explanations - themselves debatable - offered in individual cases. To invoke the pressure and anxieties generated by rapidly changing social experiences, and the deliberate attempts to impose control upon them, as Gay does in diagnosing the *malaises* in nineteenth-century perceptions of sexuality, has much to be said for it, no doubt; yet it remains tantalizingly if unavoidably loose. But it is the great virtue of this book that it remains, in detail, clearly

### The Heart

An autumn bluebottle,  
Frail winged husk with the last squeezings  
Of the year sealed up inside,

The last juices and saps of the fruits  
Crystallizing inside the stone gaze  
Of the insect-mask; countenance of sugars.

It sings softly, in search of sugars.  
The maiden sings softly,  
She whose red blouse

Is blowing on the line,  
Its buttons glittering like sugar,  
Full of the wind's tits,

That I saw her filling yesterday;  
As though she had given one of her bodies  
To the elements,

For the weather to fill,  
The red blouse pulsing on the line,  
Emptying and filling like a heart

In the strong gusts,  
The wind's heart beating on the line;  
And the sails of blood;

The stout red-rigged yachts competing on the estuary,  
Red for celerity,  
And the heart beating on the clothes-line,

And the transparent word-breathing everywhere.  
The maiden and the fly sing softly,  
It butts its drumstick head against her window,

She stares out at a heart of hers beating in the weather,  
Through the pane like a lady of the lake,  
The fly so full of sweetness it turns to cracked glass.

John Co. 1316



## Presidential visibility

Colin Seymour-Ure

MONTAGUE KERN, PATRICIA W. LEVERING and RALPH B. LEVERING  
The Kennedy Crises: The press, the presidency, and foreign policy  
290pp. University of North Carolina Press. £27.55.  
08078 1569 1

Presidential power, as Richard Neustadt put it, is the power to persuade. The relations between the American President and the news media are therefore always of interest. They are also extremely difficult to evaluate systematically, and answers to the underlying question – how far is the power to persuade enhanced or reduced by a President's press relations? – remain elusive. Accounts tend to be anecdotal and journalistic, or they are limited to themes such as executive secrecy or to descriptions of groups such as the White House press corps.

The authors of *The Kennedy Crises* limit themselves to the question of John F. Kennedy's ability to influence the coverage by five newspapers of four major foreign policy crises, and they resist the temptation to speculate about the impact of that coverage on the crises themselves. The result is a modest, workmanlike study which may leave the reader feeling slightly flat and which, oddly but persistently, brings to mind the sort of weather report that tells you more about yesterday's weather than tomorrow's. ("The 1-15 April period of the Laotian crisis makes possible the generalization that under conditions of public apathy a president could use a much less visible press strategy to achieve a similar result to that achieved during a high-visibility period.")

The authors focus on the crises in Laos and Berlin in 1961, the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 and the events surrounding the overthrow of the Diem government in Vietnam in 1963. Originally they hoped to include all major foreign policy issues of the Kennedy years and to study coverage on television and in magazines too. Since their method is to count the source cited in all front-page and inside-page news stories, plus leading articles and columnists such as Joseph Alsop and Walter Lippmann, the scale was not surprisingly reduced. Even so, they analysed 4,224 front-page and 7,024 inside-page sources, spread among the *Washington Post*, the conservative *Chicago Tribune*, the liberal *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Hearst's San*

*Francisco Examiner*, and the *New York Times* (which had twice as many stories as any of the others).

All this source-counting proves an ingenious and perfectly wieldy method of categorizing the different people competing with the President to get into the papers their view of the nature of each crisis and what should be done about it; the categories being grouped into Foreign, Official US (including the President and all branches of the administration), Domestic Political (such as Congressmen), Interest Groups (important in the Cuban crisis), Public Opinion (pollsters, private individuals) and journalists themselves. In addition the authors interviewed surviving journalists and policymakers as extensively as possible and trawled the Kennedy archives.

The results provide a tidy set of case-studies, clearly presented though without many sunny intervals. The clear lesson emerges that, for all Kennedy's charm and occasional triumphs of news management – notably in persuading the press to remain silent at the height of the missile crisis and subsequently imposing his own view of events to the virtual exclusion of others – he suffered substantial failures too. For example, the administration's internal divisions on Vietnam and Kennedy's personal silence throughout August 1963, coupled with anti-Diem stories from a variety of sources and a flow of critical reportage from David Halberstam in Saigon, all made it progressively less easy for Kennedy to adopt a pro-Diem policy even if he wanted to. Similarly, in the early period of the missile crisis the press reflected predominantly the views of headline politicians, columnists and refugee groups and threw the administration on the defensive.

As those examples show, when the President is competing with other sources to determine press coverage, it is a short step from saying that his viewpoint failed to prevail, to making conjectures about the implications of that failure for his policies – in other words, about the influence of the press upon him. When the authors talk of a challenge to the President or, in their weather report terms, of pressure and visibility, they are usually referring only to the President's ability to get the press coverage he wanted, rather than to implement his policies regardless of its balance. Granted that the book is not a study of decision-making, it seems nevertheless a pity that the authors did not go beyond their case studies to speculate at greater length both on the lessons for the presidency today and the role of press relations in the wider question of presidential power.

## Muzzling the watchdogs

James Deakin

JOSEPH C. SPEAR  
Presidents and the Press: The Nixon legacy  
249pp. MIT Press. £18.95.  
0262 19228 4

Earlier this year, Richard Nixon came into American homes, once again. The former president appeared in several lengthy television interviews, talking about many things. He seemed relaxed and philosophic, his *Sturm und Drang* behind him. The general view was that he had finally mellowed – positively the last new Nixon. He had grown tolerant of errant humanity, and humanity therefore could tolerate him, if not forgive him altogether.

Americans have either the softest hearts or the softest heads in the world. It might be merciful to forgive Nixon, but it would be extremely unwise to forget what he did or to ignore its results. He did not create the ignorance, suspicions and prejudices that blight the American nation, but he urged them on, shouting encouragement. The darker qualities of American life have always been tenacious; Nixon's accomplishment was to make them respectable. Ten years later, under a more amiable authoritarian, the hatreds and irrationalities are alive and vigorous – and as dangerous as ever. It is these flourishing consequences of Nixonian respectability that make Joseph Spear's book important.

But the American impulse is to forgive, and in forgiving, to forget. Assisted by an awe-somely-brief attention span. So when Spear offers his encyclopedic account of what Nixon did, the cry goes up: Oh, this is old stuff. It is over and done with. *Ad ineliora vertamur*: let us turn to better things. In a review of Spear's book in the *Washington Post's* "Book World", Jonathan Yardley proclaims that "kicking Richard Nixon around is easy... But grinding yesterday's axes contributes nothing useful to a discussion of today's problems". Really? I thought the adage was that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. The analogy would be a contemporary discussion of German manufacture of nuclear missiles without mention of the Third Reich.

Spear describes the techniques used by Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan to manage the news and sell themselves to the public, like soap powder. But his most distinct service is that he has pulled together the sordid story of Richard Nixon's

effort to intimidate and muzzle the American news media. As Spear demonstrates, it is much more than an attack on the press; it is a concerted assault on free speech, free press and dissent in the United States. At the time, Europeans were astounded that Americans would throw out a president for something so trivial, so customary as "Watergate". Spear's research may persuade them that the burglary and cover-up were only the items in a long list of outrages against the Constitution and the laws.

As a matter of fact, one finds oneself reluctant to let his indignation show a more clearly and unmistakably. His will, one hopes, be read by generations of young people whose moral sensitivity, if present trends continue, will require intense stimulation in order to function. Those who the Thucydidean experience of living through the whole business will not be around to remind them that what Nixon and his henchmen did was wrong. Cumulatively, the fast-numbing – but it is numbing that I fear –

Spear's central argument is that while presidents seek to manipulate the press, it was the first to carry out a "deliberate and systematic" campaign to silence journalistic criticism. The thesis is exhaustively documented, notably in a long chapter titled, "Intimidation". In immense detail, he describes the use (or rather, the misuse) of government agencies and federal law to harass and threaten reporters and news organizations. The television networks were beset with antitrust suits ("We'll bring you your knaes", Nixon aide Charles Colson, network executive), and individual TV news were threatened with the loss of their licenses. Reporters were cited for contempt of court, thrown into jail, summoned before grand juries or shadowed by government detectives. Their telephones were tapped, their cars were subpoenaed, their income tax returns audited. The vice president of the United States, Spiro Agnew, travelled around the country whipping up hatred of the media; the responses poured in: "We are tired of Niggers having all the (television) that we understand you have a Nigger oceanman." "You damn Jews have been getting away with a lot of crap, and it took the vice president to stop it... All we see (on TV) are Niggers and Jews."

Is it worthwhile to recall these things? Do they contribute something useful to the discussion of today's problems? Yes. The problems are the same.

newspapers) is too frivolous for some, (and an articulator of women's deeper aspirations) Ellen Goodman, whom an editor called "The Thinking Woman's Erma Bombeck".

The columnists are a personality cult, leaders as readers prefer to write to Jimmy somewhere rather than to a group of anonymous *Time* ulcer men calling themselves the *Time* ulcer men. Their feedback seems greatest when they write, not of great affairs, but of dogs and children. One gets the feeling that many of them are seriously over-extending themselves almost all have used their columns to "travel" into the world of television and radio, appearing on the high-paying lecture circuit. It is so maying to read that the admirable *Brighton* niao with enough self-confidence to travel to Moscow in a chauffeur-driven Rolls, because unhappy with success that he spent two long years in analysis. At least the columnists need not worry about the high technology of the future, for according to Grauer people will be alt in front of video screens to read columns.

While twitting the erudite right-wing William F. Buckley, Jr. – the "Bismarck" graduate, the "prototypical prep" – Grauer slips in glitch, mavin, phorog, the mount, scuttlabout and kryptonites. And there are "double-blind cross-over studies" and actors' social conditions.

However, it makes a good brisk read, livened by occasional echoes of *Real* controversies over "leaks" and the like. Our native trend-spotters might ponder an American joke quoted by the author: "It takes two to tango."

## Plugging the consensus

Paul Smith

JEFFREY RICHARDS  
The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and society in Britain 1930-1939  
374pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £19.95.  
07100 9764 6

What have Gregory the Great and Gracie Fields in common? Both are grist to the mill of Jeffrey Richards, the only British historian whose range extends from the medieval papacy to the popular cinema, his work on the former perhaps helping to protect his credentials against the whiff of intellectual raffishness attaching in academic circles to an interest in the latter. Few threads bind the two worlds, though Richards makes play with the doctrine of the king's two bodies in looking at the simultaneous humanization and mythologization of the monarchy in *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, and his choice of metaphor in describing the cinema-going experience suggests that he sees the Odeons and Essoldos as cathedrals of a kind, purveying the ritual drama for the masses that the medieval church once supplied.

As his own bibliography shows, Richards has been for some dozen years a leader in the attempts made by historians both to use film, especially the fiction film, as evidence of mood and mentality and to gauge the social and political influence of cinema. In cutting a bold swathe through thickets of interpretative problems which less daring colleagues would approach only after long burnishing of methodologies and boning of analytical tools, he has been the Fairbanks of the field, never unwilling to risk criticism, always provocative of debate. If his latest work buckles its swash less flamboyantly than did his first major study, *Visions of Yesterday*, it is his most ambitious effort so far to assess the social significance of the cinema.

*The Age of the Dream Palace* aims to set

British films of the 1930s in the context of their audience, their makers, and the constraints – notably censorship – affecting their production, and to show how, especially through the influence of the stars, they operated upon attitudes and behaviour. Based on a wide scan of films and very extensive reading of cinema periodicals as well as of newspapers, journals, and the records of the British Board of Film Censors, it usefully pulls together a mass of scattered evidence and commentary. The "contextual" chapters are among the best in the book. There is evocative material on the nature of the cinema-going experience and on contemporary views and fears of the influence of the cinema, especially in its impact on children, illustrated largely from the cinema "enquiries" which were usually intended to find irrefutable grounds of condemnation but never quite succeeded. The operation of the censorship is revealed in diverting detail. The style is clear and supple, with only the occasional trace of Blur's disease ("Winston Churchill, the silver-tongued orator, the warlord, England's mon of destiny").

The central purpose is to "explore the ways in which mass culture can be used to generate ideological consensus". Richards's thesis (with credits to Gramsci and Stuart Hall) is that popular cinema was employed to bolster the "hegemony" of the ruling class by transmitting the dominant ideology and propagating and validating approved values. "The pictures" are thus absorbed into the tendency fashionable among social historians to see the people's leisure as an arena not of escape from but of subliminal subordination to the mechanisms of social control fashioned by those in power. Richards would not pretend that his is a very novel story-line. Students of film like Roy Armes, historians such as Tony Aldgate and Nicholas Pronay, have all recently looked at the role of film in promoting or at least buttressing "consensus". None, however, has tried to survey the process from so many angles, and

none, perhaps, has thrown into clearer relief the difficulties involved.

The first major problem about Richards's undertaking is that it is not what it appears to be. As he says, the book is about the British cinema in the 1930s, "the least known and least appreciated decade in the history of the British sound film". That means that it cannot entirely fulfil the promise of its subtitle, "Cinema and Society in Britain", because much of British society's exposure to cinema in the 1930s was to non-British films. It is hard to doubt that Hollywood had of far more importance than Pinewood in producing whatever effect the pictures had on Britons. Working-class audiences in particular, as Richards points out, preferred American films to British – or English, which one Scottish exhibitor reported as being more foreign to his audience than the Hollywood variety. In 1936, only two natives, Gracie Fields and Jessie Matthews, figured, at third and sixth, in the *Motion Picture Herald's* list, based on box-office returns, of the ten most popular stars in Britain.

Unable to achieve international appeal, the British industry was artificially sustained by quota legislation. Even then, a good deal of its output was hardly British to the core. Several American companies established production units in Britain to make their own quota films. British companies employed foreign talents freely and oriented some of their productions to American or central European markets, often with imported stars. British International's 1935 production schedule contained six titles, four of which were musicals set in, respectively, eighteenth-century France, Napoleonic France, Vienna, and Heidelberg, with Richard Tauber, Gitta Alpar and Greta Natzler among the leads. *Farewell Again*, the film which C. A. Lejeune called "the first big British picture to catch the full sense of English character", was apparently produced by a German, directed by an American, and photographed by a Chinese. As Korda was to say at the end of the war, "all

these discussions about the British film industry succeed only in betraying the sad fact that we have not got one – as yet". A full study of the operative role of cinema in British social life would need to be set in the frame of the cosmopolitanization, or at least the Americanization, of parts of popular culture.

How far the limited sample afforded by the "British" film will sustain the weight of the "hegemonic" argument is the second problem of this book. It is not easy to establish intention to promote, or unconscious complicity in promoting, "consensus" through film production, or to measure the success of films in imprinting the desired ideas upon their audiences. A good deal of the evidence produced here does not seem incompatible with the view that the mass-circulation feature film was the product of commercial calculation rather than socio-political strategy, reflected as much as it sought to create "consensus", and had only a relatively superficial formative effect on the spectators.

"The film industry", Richards asserts, "was run by men who desired to be seen as part of the Establishment themselves and who were anxious to maintain the continued goodwill of the government to ensure the legislative protection of the industry needed in order to compete with the Americans." There are certainly signs that some industry chiefs were eager not merely not to offend the government but to assist it. The most interesting case is Alexander Korda, one of those émigrés who seem impelled to define the host country's national characteristics for it. Richards has already dealt at length with Korda's enthusiastic projection of the British empire on to the screen, and has noted his links with the Conservative party and the fact that he was among the leading figures of the film industry cultivated by Joseph Ball in the interest of the National Government. Balcon and Gaumont British, too, had close official contacts. Yet Korda was also linked with critics of National Government

## Megabuck super-hacks

E. S. Turner

NEIL A. GRAUER  
Wits and Sages  
268pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. \$15.95.  
08018 3189 X

There may be no national press in America, but the roving visitor who buys out-of-town newspapers to read will find himself everywhere faced with columns by the same by-lined wags, rumormongers, analysts and debunkers who perform in the big-city sheets. If he turns on the television in his motel he may well find members of this ubiquitous "fraternity" arguing, joshing (and recyelling) on "discussion" programmes.

The small-town editor pays derisory fees – \$5 or less – for these syndicated columns, but as he shovels them into his pages (sometimes the comic pages) he is wryly aware that whereas his own writ extends to only a few square miles of prairie these cut-price contributors have a following in every state of the Union.

When Karl Marx wrote his unsigned columns for the *New York Tribune* at \$10 a time, he complained of "continual journalistic hack work." Had he been profitably syndicated in several hundred newspapers history might have taken a different turn. But there was no call for syndication when Larceny sufficed.

It was not until the 1920s that syndication became, in the words of Neil A. Grauer, a "megabuck operation". The big names of this peculiarly American phenomenon included

Will Rogers, Heywood Brown, Walter Lippmann, Franklin P. Adams and the gossip-monger Walter Winchell. It is not hard to trace a common ancestry by way of the cracker-barrel philosophers of last century back to the droll Benjamin Franklin, never a man to let the facts get in the way of a good column.

In a book which is a very American in approach and vocabulary, Neil A. Grauer, himself a journalist, takes twelve living columnists and tells us not only what they write and earn, but often what they eat and weigh. Apart from Art Buchwald, predictably hailed as a "clown prince", his subjects are little-known in Britain. One or two tend to figure in the news round-ups from America only when they unearth some scandal or commit some outrage.

Jack Anderson, the self-described muckraker who has pride of place in these pages, runs what is virtually a newspaper in miniature. A one-time Mormon missionary, now dedicated to diverting the Kansas City milkman, he employs thirteen reporters, whom he calls "outcasts and boat-rockers". He took over Draw Pearson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round" and extended its clientele from 600 to 1,000 newspapers. Like almost everyone in this book he has won a Pulitzer Prize, though his 1972 award was grudging by the ratifying body because its scoop involved the use of pilfered documents. Anderson retorted that it was sloppy reporting to make statements without the aid of documents, when these were available. But soon afterwards he did just that, in a notorious charge against Senator Thomas Eagle-

ton, and in his own words "had to eat maybe 350 plates of crow". At the time of Watergate this scourge of "poohbahs" and high muckamucks" claimed to have eighteen CIA radio cars trailing him.

The graver Washington columnists, sometimes accused of writing primarily for the President or for each other, are neatly dissected. George F. Will not only schooled Ronald Reagan for his 1980 televised debate with Jimmy Carter, but drafted his 1982 speech to the British Parliament, thereby earning himself much scorn from such fellow columnists as the brash, "street-wise" fugitives from Runyonland, Jimmy Breslin and Mike Royko (both of whom are entertainingly profiled). The black columnist, Carl T. Rowan, was taken into government by President Kennedy and later appointed ambassador to Finland; then, under President Johnson, he became director of the US Information Agency, in which role he had to defend operations in Vietnam. One political columnist, Russell Baker, found it too much; he pulled out of Eisenhower's Washington, dubbing the White House "The Tomb of the Well-Known Warrior", and made a name as an essayist instead.

One of Grauer's more likeable subjects is Erma Bombeck, a disciple of Robert Benchley, fated to be known as "the Socrates of the Ironing-board". Recognition humour for woman is her strong suit. How many women, one wonders, recognize themselves in "Bombeck gets up at six in the morning and drives her Mercedes to a fitness centre a few miles away for an aerobics class"? Erma Bombeck (900-

### The British Library Journal

General Editor: Mirjam M. Foot

A scholarly publication devoted to the study of the British Library's collections rather than to library technology.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 38 (N. America), £26 (UK), £21 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 21 (N. America), £15.50 (UK), £12.50 (elsewhere)

### The Library

The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society

General Editor: Mervyn Janneila

The pre-eminent journal for the history of books, both manuscript and printed, and the role of books in history.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 50 (N. America), £24 (UK), £20 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 17 (N. America), £8.50 (UK), £6.50 (elsewhere)

### Notes and Queries

Editors: L.G. Black, D. Hewitt, and E.G. Stanley

Founded in 1840, this is a journal devoted principally to English language and literature, lexicography, history, and scholarly

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 50 (N. America), £25 (UK), £20 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 15 (N. America), £8.50 (UK), £6.50 (elsewhere)

### Theatre Research

Editor: Claude Schumacher

Publishes original articles on theatre history and criticism, with the focus on performance, acting and production techniques, theatre architecture, and actors' social conditions.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 45 (N. America), £22 (UK), £17 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 14 (N. America), £8.50 (UK), £6.50 (elsewhere)

### The Review of English Studies

A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and English Language

Editor: R.E. Alton

Covering from the earliest period up to the present day, each issue contains articles, notes, reviews of recent books, and a summary of periodical literature.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 55 (N. America), £26 (UK), £22 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 18 (N. America), £9 (UK), £7 (elsewhere)

### The British Journal of Aesthetics

Editor: T.J. Diffey

The main purpose is to provide a medium for study of the philosophy of art and the principles of aesthetic appreciation and judgement.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 50 (N. America), £24 (UK), £20 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 16 (N. America), £7 (UK), £6.50 (elsewhere)

### Oxford Art Journal

Editorial Board: R. Wrigley, V. Schuster, D. Alston, N. McWilliam, and C. Bailey

An international periodical which publishes articles on historical and contemporary art subjects.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 37.50 (N. America), £18 (UK), £12 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 21 (N. America), £9.50 (UK), £7.25 (elsewhere)

### English

The Journal of the English Association

Editor: Martin Dodsworth

A journal of literary criticism, publishing essays and reviews, in a style intelligible to all.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 40 (N. America), £17.50 (UK), £13 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 14 (N. America), £8 (UK), £6 (elsewhere)

## JOURNALS FROM OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

### The Cambridge Quarterly

The Cambridge Journal of Literary Criticism

Editors: D. Gervais, R.D. Gooder, J.R. Harvey, H.A. Mason, A.P. Newton, and W.W. Robson

The *Cambridge Quarterly* was founded in 1964 to publish articles and reviews of interest both to the specialist and to the general reader. Principally devoted to literary criticism, it also regularly publishes articles on painting, sculpture, music and cinema. The aim of the journal is to take a critical look at accepted views.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 45 (N. America), £20 (UK), £15 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 15 (N. America), £8 (UK), £6 (elsewhere)

### NEW FOR 1985

#### Mind

A Quarterly Review of Philosophy

Editor: Dr Simon Blackburn

The best known British philosophical journal, and one of the most widely read and respected journals in professional philosophy. Founded in 1876, for over a century it has represented the leading philosophical ideas of its time. From 1985 it will be published on behalf of the Mind Association by Oxford University Press.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 32.50 (N. America), £10 (UK), £8 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 10 (N. America), £5.50 (UK), £4.25 (elsewhere)

### Journal of Semiotic Studies

Editors: C.E. Bosworth and M.E.J. Richardson

Established in 1955 at the University of Manchester, under the editorship of I.I.I. Rowley and P.R. Wels, *Journal of Semiotic Studies* quickly built up a reputation as one of leading international academic journals in its field. "Semiotic Studies" has always been understood by the editors to include the modern as well as the ancient Near East, with special emphasis on research into the languages and literatures of the area.

Subscriptions 1985: US\$ 45 (N. America), £20 (UK), £13 (elsewhere)  
Single issues 1985: US\$ 30 (N. America), £10 (UK), £8 (elsewhere)



policy like Churchill and Vansittart, and as early as 1937 he was beginning, with *Fire Over England*, what Richards sees as a series of films emphasizing the need for preparedness against the menace of Nazism.

To show that the film industry in general acted as the creature or the auxiliary of government in the propagation of consensus, however defined would require a greater body of evidence about the decision-making of its chiefs than is here presented. Given that Richards explicitly approaches the films of the 1930s as products of an industry rather than as works of art, he is thin on the industrial process and on the personalities, motives and methods of the "shrewd high priests" who "produced the films, manufactured the stars, ran the studios, created the dreams". The investigation of British film as product continues to be bedeviled by the lack of the records now extensively available for the Hollywood industry: producers and directors' self-serving reminiscences are no substitute for the production files. A mere dozen pages on "The Dream Merchants" leaves us little wiser about what the Ostrers, the Deutsches and the Maxwells who held the purse strings were up to, and about its relationship to the demands of a shadowy "Establishment".

It is largely on the work of the censorship that Richards relies to show the manipulation of cinema for purposes of social control. The script reports from the now celebrated comedy team of Colonel Hanna and Miss Short provide abundant evidence of the determination of the British Board of Film Censors to keep off the screen the immoral and the controversial (defined to include anything which might bring established institutions and authorities into disrepute or derision). The Board's informal but none the less close links with government are clear — and not only with British governments, since films set in foreign countries were frequently referred to the relevant embassies in case they should contain anything offensive. Yet it is debatable how far we should see in this a systematic effort of ideological domination by a ruling class. The BBFC was the product more of the industry's desire to protect its business from fragmentary censorship by local authorities and from the possi-

bility of disturbance among audiences than of a state drive to control the media. If it was intended to exclude vectors of social and political change, it was oddly ineffective. The American material which formed the staple of popular cinema was much more leniently treated than were British films. Indeed the censorship possibly contributed to the difficulties of the British film and the erosion of the social values it was supposed to sustain by emasculating it in such a way as to enhance the competitive appeal of the transatlantic product, with its very different presuppositions. As Peter Stead has argued in a valuable essay, the lack of everyday reality often complained of in British cinema, with its succession of adapted stage plays woodenly rendered in painful accents, was countered by the ability of its American rival to show the recognizable life of ordinary people.

Richards allows that some American films did "promote democratic ideals and depict a classless society in operation", but he pushes the question of their subversive influence aside with the observations that Hollywood was very ready to produce films glorifying Britain and its empire and that in any case American films were subject to the Hays Code, which, like British censorship, aimed at the protection of the status quo. This is not altogether convincing. The critics of cinema were opposed as much to its patent Americanizing influence as to its power to undermine social and political norms, yet when the two came together, whatever hegemonic apparatus the British ruling class possessed did little about it. American films may have contributed to that slow evolution of the national mood in favour of social change sometimes attributed to the impact of the Second World War but perceptible enough by the end of the 1930s to be reflected even in a few British films — Richards instances *The Stars Look Down* and *The Proud Valley*.

The fact that by the end of the decade some British films were articulating social and political unease suggests that the cinema looked for a lead from "consensus" rather than seeking to impose it: feature films were mostly an educated commercial guess at the median taste of a very variegated market. Over most of the 1930s it is doubtful that there was much demand for the screening of conflicts and issues:

people went to the pictures for other things. Of course distraction can itself be seen (and is) by Richards as a tool of hegemony; but it can also be regarded as a natural need of the 90 per cent of the population that is not composed of full-time activists. Distraction did not exclude an element of reality in cinema, but the reality that was most acceptable was a heightening of the more heartening and tolerable aspects of ordinary existence, giving audiences the opportunity of humorous, sentimental, affectionate self-recognition in situations which stressed their better qualities and the strength of their communal values. Such is the conclusion that might be drawn from Richards's sym-



Ronald Reagan playing the part of a professor in the Warner Brothers film *She's Working Her Way Through College* (1932), reproduced from the book reviewed below.

pathetic discussion of Gracie Fields and George Formby, the two most popular British stars with working-class audiences. Paraded to demonstrate the proposition that the star is the primary vehicle for the imprinting of approved behaviour and the reduction of social and economic conflicts to individual problems which are solved by the exercise of "charisma", they are taken to represent the essence of dreary individualism, the sing-along and survive approach to the Depression which excludes questioning of social and political systems.

Richards is at his most persuasive in these perceptive chapters, but it is still hard to see anything like an industry-cum-government collusion to keep the workers in their place. The movement which he traces in Gracie Fields's films from proletarianism to individualist, self-help overtures, with the occultation of hope and promise, looks like a case of the industry's antennae responding to shifts in mood as the Depression lifted. *Sing As We Go*, with which Richards marks the transition, appeared in 1934, exactly when economic upturn was becoming evident as unemployment steadily fell from the peak reached in January 1933. It was picked up the theme of the technological innovation which was a major element in recovery: the mill was saved by a new wonder process.

Whatever values of endurance and restraint or of individualism and self-betterment the major stars may have been used to project, the masses in any case continued to have access to a now forgotten cinema less respectful of or permeated by middle-class values, the cinema of Lucan and McShane or of Leslie Fuller, which may have meant more in many urban areas than that of Jessie Matthews or Leslie Howard; a weakness of Richards's analysis is the lack of any attempt to investigate which films were successful — or seen — in which places. At least until further research enlarges our knowledge of production processes and audience response, the case for regarding 1930s cinema as the insidious agent of the ruling class rather than as commercial speculation remains unproven. The cinema, one suspects, was less often the tool than the toady of "hegemony", more the parasite than the promoter of "consensus".

## Visiting the campus

Anthony Quinton

WILEY LEE UMPHLETT: *The Movies Go to College: Hollywood and the world of the college-life film*. 208pp. Associated University Presses. £16.50. 0838631339

Pensacola, Florida, best known for its naval air station, is also the home of the University of West Florida. Wiley Lee Umphlett is director of extension programmes there. Having previously written on the sporting myth in contemporary American fiction and on the nostalgic vision in popular culture, he has now superimposed one of these interests on the other. *The Movies Go to College* is a detailed study of a genre that is as clearly demarcated as are those of western, gangster and science-fiction films. It is very much less populous than any of them and has the further weakness of never having produced a very good or even a very successful film. Indeed few of its constituents manage to exercise much attraction as pieces of camp. The information retrieval undertaken is impressive. Nearly 240 pictures; between *Classmates* and *Strongheart* from Biograph in 1914 and *Dirty Tricks* and *Terror Train* in 1981, are listed. There are some mildly suggestive variations in frequency (which might be less marked if the general level of production in the American film industry were taken into account). After a slow start there were four big years from 1926 to 1929; then a fall back until the biggest year of all: 1938, with fifteen films. Since 1952 things have been rather quiet. Only in 1970, the time of student uprisings, were there more than four. In most of them there were only one or two; in four of them none at all.

Professor Umphlett divides his narrative into four intellectual and distinct chunks. Until the

late 1920s and the arrival of sound the field was dominated by football, at once the road to success and social acceptance for the timid individual and key to solvency for the marginal institution. Thus in *The College Widow* of 1927, Dolores Costello (resolutely spelt 'Dejores' in text, picture caption and index) saves her father's job as president by using her charms to recruit a powerful football team. The flaming youth aspect of the campus scene develops steadily, especially with the erotic emancipation supplied by the automobile. The curvaceous co-ed begins to eclipse the hero of the gridiron. In 1929 Clara Bow undermines the moral fibre of her anthropology professor, Fredric March, in *The Wild Party*.

By very close scrutiny of his material Umphlett manages to discern serious moral themes: the clash of personal ideals with a rigid system to which they must be adjusted, if not sacrificed; the idea "that we can learn more about life through our direct relationships with people than we can through any artificial contact we may have through books and the classroom"; a modest trulism described by him as an "anti-intellectual posture".

In the 1930s fun and spectacle took over. Sound made the campus musical possible; the Depression made it necessary. In this epoch many major stars found their way into the college environment. Bing Crosby and James Stewart appear as professors, Jack Oakie as a dean in a piece of bawling inspired by Beach-Comber (he was more usually a football player), Betty Grable and Dick Powell in more natural roles. The morally idealizing nature of college football was incarnated in films about Knute Rockne: *The Spirit of Notre Dame* in 1931, the year of his death, and *Knute Rockne—All American* at the other end of the decade. More typical are *Hold That Co-ed* or a Sonja Henie vehicle, *My Lucky Star*, in which "the little Norwegian blonde becomes involved in

a large department store publicity stunt to advertise its winter sportswear when she is sent to perform in an ice carnival at a New England college modelled after Dartmouth". It was the drunken trip Fitzgerald took to write a similar film at Dartmouth a year later (*Winter Carnival*) that supplied the plot for Budd Schulberg's *The Disenchanted*.

Apart from such weirdly fascinating items there is little to recall from the 1930s apart from *Horse Feathers*, immortal at least for its compelling college, Darwin and Huxley, and for Groucho Marx's exchange with the girl he is taking out in a canoe: "Oh Professor Wagstaff you're so full of whimsy." "Can you amell it from there?" College as a series of farce and fantasy persisted through the war, even if stiffened now and then with an infusion of school spirit. Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland save an Arizona college by putting on a rodeo, Esther Williams's *Bathing Beauty* (featuring Harry James and Xavier Cugat) has a just discernible college location; Ronald Reagan in one of several professorial roles comes to the aid of ex-stripper student Virginia Mayo in *She's Working Her Way Through College* (Umphlett observes: "Miss Mayo is compelled to assume a more socially acceptable identity lest her plans be quashed at the outset").

In the immediate post-war years we find Rosalind Russell removing first spectacles and then severely cut suit in academic surroundings as well as the more usual corporate ones. Clark Gable as hardened newspaperman sits at the feet of journalism instructor Doris Day. Andy Hardy attends Wainwright College in a number of films. Abbott and Costello, as caretakers at a women's college, are backed up by Phil Spitalny's all-girl orchestra. Umphlett suggests, rather adventurously, that *Monster on the Campus*, a horror film of 1958, is, as he colourfully puts it, "an unwitting portent and symbol of the stigma that many students would

come to attach to their college and university leaders during the troubled and turbulent times of the late 1960s".

By the end of the 1950s college sports have faded from the screen, replaced in the public mind by professional sport. Old-fashioned merriment persists in such things as *Mr. Belvedere Goes to College*. More of its epoch is the film in which Professor Anthony Quinton has the good fortune to get student Ann-Margret into his bed. An extraordinary novelty is tried in *The Paper Chase* where serious academic work is shown, in a somewhat overheated fashion, producing the same shock effect as a Western in which cowboys are actually concerned with the herding of cattle. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Love Story* are only college movies by accident. *Carnal Knowledge*, *The Way We Were* and, after a fashion, *Animal House* make some claim to be remembered. How did *Miss The End of the Road* (1970), in which a professor masturbates behind a desk while reading Shakespeare and a co-ed casually rolls a joint during a classroom lecture? With the attenuation of the genre in the years since it came out, its title is doubly appropriate.

Professor Umphlett has dredged up a lot of forgettable matter, some of which is mildly pleasant to have called back to mind. As the quotations have been intended to show, his comments are heavy-handed. College movies have been in all but a handful of recent instances little more than entertaining froth, spiced now and then with the kind of rudimentary moralizing to be found in old-fashioned children's stories. Television has taken over the job of froth-provision; so that now movies have to be amazing or serious. The campus offers little opportunity for the filmmaker in either direction. *The Movies Go to College* cannot be said to be more than a slightly bizarre conducted stroll down memory lane.

## Newly imperishable

David Bromwich

ALEXANDER W. ALLISON, HERBERT BARROWS, CAESAR R. BLAKE, ARTHUR J. CARR, ARTHUR M. EASTMAN and HUBERT M. ENGLISH, Jr (Editors)  
The Norton Anthology of Poetry  
Third Edition  
1,452pp. Norton. Paperback, £10.50. 0393953718

*The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, to be distinguished from the *Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* and the two-volume *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, is meant primarily for use as a first and second-year college textbook. As a selection of short poems in English, it is unmanageable compared to Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book*, and tasteless (using the word neutrally and pejoratively) compared to the work of a real anthologist such as Palgrave. But it contains about half the lines a more advanced reader is likely to want nearby when his memory goes blank; and the other half could never find a rubric anyway to justify printing them all between two covers. This sort of monster tome must have seemed until lately an unexportable American item; but the third edition makes it available "for students overseas" and since Norton produces it cheaply, it may catch on. The pages are clean and legible, and the contents printed in chronological order. If its price succeeded in driving out the competition, and this becomes the common resource for readers seeking to educate themselves in poetry, the result would be unhappy but not catastrophic.

As befits a modern textbook, it has very copious notes. "He, the young man caruncular, arrives"; stop, note — "afflicted with caruncles, a boil-like inflammation". The notes fall short of the encyclopedic anecdote, however, and one does not learn which nineteenth-century sage declared the bourgeoisie would suffer for his caruncles. The working assumption of the editors seems to be that their readers are capable of using an encyclopedia on occasion, but never a dictionary. "The homely Nurse doth all she can"; stop, note — "simple, kindly". But without the echo of home in homely, one loses much of the poignance of Wordsworth's thought. There seem to be times when a basic knowledge of grammar ought to guide the reader sufficiently; beyond that, any

help is a hindrance. Indeed, the danger of over-annotating is that the reader may come to identify interpretation with synonymization, and find that Mount Parnassus is only Mount The-saurus after all.

Norton's first edition came out in 1970, its second in 1975. The most noticeable change for the second was the inclusion of several women (Anne Bradstreet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Diane Wakoski, Nikki Giovanni). Less noticeable were some quiet shifts of canonical emphasis: the selections from Housman were cut by a third, Stevens went up from six poems to fourteen and Larkin from three to six. In the third edition, the biggest losers are those who have no descendants to argue their case: Anon (fifteenth century) has gone down from twenty-one selections to thirteen, and Popular Ballads from twenty-three to fifteen. Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who had just one poem in the first edition before being removed altogether in the second, has not come back, but in his place we may find Richard Hugo, Margaret Atwood, and Leonard Cohen. Once this might have appeared as a conscious decision. We could picture the editor reading Lord Herbert's ode on love,

These eyes again then, eyes shall see  
And hands again these hands come to,  
And all chest pleasures can be told  
Shall with us everlasting be,

then picture the editor reading Leonard Cohen's "Suzanne Takes You Down",  
And you want to travel with her,  
You want to travel blind  
and you know that she can trust you  
because you're touched her perfect body  
with your mind.

and know that after pondering both he had chosen the latter as the more imperishable verse. But today it is melodramatic to suppose such a moment of choice. Much likelier, what happened was that the committee of editors realized they would never feel much pressure from a committee for the promotion of seventeenth-century poetry.

By contrast, the pressure of the contemporary has been a force in the shaping of this anthology. Counted in pages, the ratio of poets born after 1910 to those born before was one-to-eleven for the first edition; now it is one-to-four. In a little more than a decade the vitality of the living has greatly improved, but the

proportion is not to be taken as a statement about the value of the poetry written in our time. It is rather a diplomatic response to various demands. Among these are the demand that books which represent a culture assist in strengthening its marginal voices; that creative writers be given an outlet directly into the canon; and perhaps that beginning students be rewarded for their efforts with earlier and more difficult poems. Some of the added names are in fact durable names: in this third edition, Elizabeth Bishop makes her Norton debut, with nine poems. So far different reasons does Edna St Vincent Millay. But most of the contemporary selections exist chiefly to take note of the rising reputations of the past few years: Seamus Heaney and Geoffrey Hill have more poems than before; and the short, bad, unrepresentative selection from John Ashbery has been altered to preserve its original contours.

A new feature of the third edition is a concluding essay on versification by Jon Stallworthy (also represented by three poems, the same number as Fulke Greville but one more than William Empson). Its opening statement is false: "A poem is a composition written for performance by the human voice." Better to say that it always may be that, though few poems present themselves as texts for performance in so restricted a sense. Once he gets to the numbers, Stallworthy marches confidently across the ambiguous terrain from "London Bridge is falling down" to "A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many...". At intervals, he tries to forge *ad hoc* alliances between sound and sense, and ends up somewhere between Pope and Dick Minim. The short opening lines of Donne's "The Sunne Rising" are said to be well suited to the expression of "shock"; the same argument presumably would not apply to the short lines of Marvell's Horatian Ode. But there is much more in this vein: "Whereas iambic meter has a certain gravity, making it a natural choice for poems on more solemn subjects, the trochaic foot has a lighter, quicker, more buoyant movement." As, for example, in the trochaic "Certainty, fidelity / On the stroke of midnight pass"? Or the iambic "He was not warm on Picking-work to dwell, / But faggotted his notions as they fell, / And if they Rhim'd and Ratt'd, all was well?"

## Setting the beat

Nigel Wheale

LARRY SMITH  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti: Poet-at-large  
262pp. Southern Illinois University Press  
(distributed in the UK by TABS) £22.50.  
(paperback, \$9.95).  
0809311011

What was the San Francisco poetry renaissance? Kenneth Rexroth collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti in the jazz and poetry evenings given at "The Cellar", North Beach, in 1957. He wrote at the time that they were great shows, received with wild enthusiasm: if they could be turned into a record they might start a craze, like swallowing live goldfish or playing pee wee golf. Two years before, Rexroth had composed a reading where Allen Ginsberg first gave "Howl" to the world; Jack Kerouac had helped the poets out by hustling the audience for jug-wine contributions. A long time after the fun and the hedonism, Larry Smith hopes to establish the writings of Lawrence Ferlinghetti as worthy of serious academic study by making large claims for their literary — and political — status.

Smith provides a useful chronological survey of the poet's life, listing influences and publications year by year. The biography is followed by an exploration of Ferlinghetti's commitment to what is an essentially European tradition of surrealism, engaged writing in the manner of Rimbaud and Apollinaire, of Sarrute and Camus. André Breton's *Nadja* was a direct model for Ferlinghetti's own disordered novel, *Her*, begun in the late 1940s. With his arrival in San Francisco in 1951 Ferlinghetti's career as a West Coast poet/publisher began. He worked

culture, but was always insistent upon his populist, committed stance: "Only the dead are disengaged", he wrote in 1959. Smith follows this element through a survey of Ferlinghetti's poetry, drama and varied prose works.

"Bohemian" in the sense of a "gipsy of society" is first recorded by the *OED* in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and so the term emerged in or about 1848, which was a very good time to come into language. Social disaffection expressed in terms of conspicuous nonconformity of dress, manners and morality is from that period a popular option among certain sections of the community. Most Bohemians are dress and riff-raff, as the more rigorous practitioners have always observed: Kerouac denounced the bland "sociological coolness", which amateur Beats adopted in the mid-1950s, a conformism even less interesting than that which they were supposedly rejecting. Bohemia is only redeemed for the rest of society when it becomes an active cultural grouping, that is, when its refusal of convention is expressed through painting, writing, music, or fashion. John Clennon Holmes, another denizen of the West Coast renaissance, put it this way: "a book is not as ephemeral as a beard".

Lawrence Ferlinghetti undeniably produced the books. Smith's first chapter relates how, together with a partner in June 1953, Ferlinghetti set up City Lights Bookstore, which was intended to be much more than just a retail outlet, since it was also to provide a venue for all kinds of cultural exchange in San Francisco. As Ferlinghetti recalls, its success was immediate, "we literally could not shut the doors at closing time". The City Lights Pocket Poets Series was launched in 1955 as an inexpensive, mass-circulation format for the best avant-

Ferlinghetti's own *Pictures of the Gone World*, and over forty other titles have appeared to date. Tens of thousands of readers must have experienced their first off-beat writing in the square format and blunt typography of the Pocket Poets Series.

Larry Smith's case for Ferlinghetti as a mischievous cultural activist holds up very well when seen in the context of the poet's editing and publishing. But it has to be said that the same case for Ferlinghetti's own writing is not very well served. Smith's commentary is often rather relaxed, and the appelling of French names is slightly erratic. Ferlinghetti is described as being "existentially alive to the humor of survival", and "he is still in the San Francisco streets of America, his blue eyes sparkling with innocence and wit". An unforced sentimentality is the obvious content of too many of Ferlinghetti's poems, and they cannot be raised to a higher power by invoking the abstract expressionism of Kline, Pollock, "and people like that" as formal justification. Reading Ferlinghetti is certainly better than swallowing live goldfish, but he isn't a major poet.

160 unpublished poems by E. E. Cummings have been brought together by George V. Frimarge and Richard S. Kennedy in *Excetera* (188pp. Norton, £6.95. 0 87140 128 2). The majority date from before 1930 and include juvenilia, poems discovered among the papers at the *Dial* magazine, and a collection of love poems dedicated to the poet's first wife. The book takes its place in The Cummings Type-script Editions, which remain faithful to his own spacing. This experimentation looks less innovative now than it would have at the time, but the characteristic verve and spontaneity

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287pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.  
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What is the reason for the remarkable commercial success of *The Politics of Consent*? Undistinguished in style and devoid of constructive ideas, its wistful and elegiac tone reminds us that Francis Pym is the Betjeman of the modern Conservative Party; he is essentially a purveyor of nostalgia. The arrival of his book on to the bestseller lists shows indeed the strength of that longing for the past among members of the political class whom Margaret Thatcher has dispossessed.

The vulgar epithet "wet" conceals two quite different types of opposition to Mrs Thatcher's Tory populism. The first, represented by modernizers such as Michael Heseltine and Peter Walker, welcomes the Prime Minister's radicalism but abjures the policies of economic liberalism which she believes necessary for national renewal. The second, represented by the patriots — Lord Whitelaw and Lord Car-

lington, and also Mr Pym — longs for the revival of a political culture which has irretrievably passed away. For, while it is possible to imagine Mrs Thatcher adopting the recipe of the modernizers — her commitment to the market economy stemming from cultural rather than ideological roots — she can hardly now return to the politics of the lost consensus.

The essence of that consensus has been well explained by Andrew Gamble, one of Britain's few original Marxist thinkers. It consists in trying "to solve the problems of the social democratic state within the institutional constraints of that state — that is without challenging fundamentally the size of the public sector, the bargaining strength of the unions, or the expectations of the electorate". These constraints have now been challenged very dramatically by Mrs Thatcher, and it is difficult to see how any future Conservative government could accept the self-denying ordinances embodied in them. Any alternative Conservative philosophy, therefore, must begin from the truism that the political clock can rarely be put back; it must, therefore, be post rather than pre-Thatcherite in its fundamental conceptions.

Francis Pym, however, is incapable of offering such an alternative because he embodies a style of politics which sees political accommodation as an end in itself. His style is, to

barrow Oakeshott's terminology, that of the "enjoyment" politician for whom governing is one of those "activities where what is sought is present enjoyment and not a profit, a reward, a prize or a result in addition to the experience itself". Pym's style of Conservatism seeks to provide an answer to the question — who should have power? But it does not explain what is to be done with that power once it has been achieved.

As an "enjoyment" politician, Pym quite fails to understand the reasons for the ascendancy which Mrs Thatcher has been able to achieve in the Conservative Party. At least Bruce Arnold's book does not suffer from that particular defect. Written by a skilful political journalist, *Margaret Thatcher: A study in power* is far superior to the run-of-the-mill campaign biography in its analysis of the Prime Minister's carefully concealed departures from that iron consistency which she sets herself as a basic standard.

But Arnold's central theme is nearly as simplistic as Pym's. He is concerned to show that Mrs Thatcher's political success is the result not of "a succession of accidents" as her previous biographers, *Times* reporters Nicholas Wapshot and George Brook, would have it, but flows from her single-minded and ruthless pursuit of power. Such an interpretation, however, either explains too little — in not dis-

tinguishing the quality of Mrs Thatcher's pursuit of power from that of other, similarly placed politicians — or too much — because it fails to take account of that element of contingency which, as every politician instinctively understands, lies at the heart of political life. Indeed, the wise politician finds himself in natural sympathy with Schopenhauer's observation that, of the three great powers in the world — sagacity, strength and luck — the last which is the most efficacious. Any analysis of a political leader which fails to comprehend that element is bound, therefore, to be badly flawed.

These two books reveal how much the debate on Britain's future has become — perhaps only temporarily — a debate within the Conservative Party, with politicians from other parties struggling from offshore to have their voices heard. The struggle within the Conservative Party reflects a conflict within the electorate itself, as it seeks to hold on to the past while also seeking the fruits of modernization if not the pains of transition. This conflict is at bottom a cultural one, and, as Martin Wiener has so perceptively noticed, British history in the 1980s "may turn less on traditional political struggles than on a cultural contest between the two faces of the middle class". When such a contest comes to be judged these two books will prove interesting exhibits.

fall of parliamentary reputations. The Whip's Office seemed to believe that its elaborate manoeuvres could bring the government down. Instead, in 1914, came the war; an event which Sanders takes in a matter-of-fact fashion. He departs with his regiment to winter at Clacton-on-Sea, to be followed by service in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The diarist returned to Westminster in 1917 and acted, in Ramsden's words, as "a sort of unofficial party Chief Whip" in opposition to the Government Chief Whips. In 1918 he also became Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party Organization and thus became influential and active in directing the affairs of the party in the country, an involvement which, in other posts, lasted for a further twenty years. Inevitably, therefore, Sanders has much to reveal, if only incidentally, about the cross-currents of politics in the Coalition years. There was little doubt that Conservatives in the coun-

try were hostile to Lloyd George and there was much mediating to do. It is not surprising that at the Carlton Club meeting Sanders himself voted against the Coalition. His own parliamentary career made modest progress. He became Under Secretary at the War Office in 1921 and Minister of Agriculture in 1922-23, but he lost his seat in 1923.

Although he re-entered the Commons in 1924, his brief absence seems to have been fatal to his own advancement. The remaining entries take us back to the world of the backbencher, though the personal disappointment he must have felt does not obtrude. Despite his country image, Sanders was neither unselfish (he had taken a First in Jurisprudence at Oxford) nor indolent. Reading his diaries, we get a valuable perspective on Conservative politics which amply underlines the importance of publication and vindicates *The Historians' Press* in their enterprise.

grounding in foreign policy but also in domestic and economic policy, since he had also to cope with the devastation of war in the liberated countries. Economic policy had attracted him in Britain before the war, and to practise it even on foreign countries gave him a post-war advantage which his superior and rival, Anthony Eden, entirely lacked.

The *War Diaries* do not reveal a great deal that is new about the successive crises which he had to handle: the interminable quarrels of the French in exile, the confused consequences of the Italian armistice and "co-belligerence", the Greek Communists' attempt to seize Athens, the conflict with the Yugoslavs over Trieste, and so on. But it is Macmillan's own reactions that matter. He had an ill-defined responsibility over a vast area in which communications were slow and difficult. He experienced severe dangers and hardships with unruffled calm. He never lost sight of the guiding light with which he set out at the beginning of 1943: "Although neither I nor the Prime Minister had the slightest idea what I was going to do, I would do it with the utmost diligence and perseverance."

This was also to be the clue to his political style. At some point in his career he appreciated that there is nothing the public likes more in a politician than to be a good ham actor. (President Reagan also learned this lesson, but he had no choice: he simply is a good ham actor, whereas for Macmillan it was a conscious decision.) He has tried several roles: before the war he played the people's tribune in industrial Scotland; after the war he played the world-weary Edwardian aristocrat. In the

role of Newbolt's Englishman, always ready to rally the ranks with a few well-chosen words.

No crisis could disturb or even surprise him. The absurd antics of French generals and Balkan politicians were neutralized with carefully concealed amusement. Bullies flying at Athens are of no consequence: "The sniper who shoots down our street is being awfully good. He seems to be letting us alone in the garden." British and American grandees are painfully reduced to size. The photographs nicely catch the spirit of the performance. The Guards moustache hardly conceals the still upper lip. The tribally hat and bow-tie must have been chosen to delight the Americans.

None of the skilful hamming can conceal the brilliant intelligence with which Macmillan did what he had not the slightest idea he was going to do. His almost daily record of the Greek crisis to 1944 shows his contemporary judgement at its best. He pointed out well in advance the danger of pursuing contradictory policies in Greece and Yugoslavia; he warned that the Greek Communists would refuse to disarm their army; he argued that "even Winston's popularity will not enable him to force a King upon Greece by British arms"; and he rightly foresaw that Stalin would "sell the Greek Communists down the drain".

Historians will need no warning to take some copies in the *War Diaries* with a pinch of salt, but it is surprising how few. The plain argument of such reminiscences can look forward to an unqualified treat. He will perhaps particularly enjoy the author's uncombed magnificence to escape from the constancy from which he

# Somerset on the march

## J. P. Kenyon

ROBIN CLIFTON  
The Last Popular Rebellian: The Western Rising of 1685  
300pp. Maunice Temple Smith. £17.50.  
0851172474

In the first sentence of his new book Robin Clifton describes Monmouth's rebellion as "one of the most written-over insurrections in English history". "Over-written" would be a better term. As Clifton notes, there have been half-a-dozen books on it in the past fifteen years, a fact the more surprising in that the surviving evidence is strictly limited, and most of it known far the past century or more; so that to an unusual degree any historian approaching the subject anew is climbing on the shoulders of his predecessors.

With this in mind Clifton's silence on his predecessors is quite remarkable. None of them is named in his acknowledgments (though some rather strange people are), and only two are cited in his notes; once each in the last chapter. For instance, I noticed no reference at all to Charles Chenevix-Trench's *The Western Rising* (1969), which offers a valuable appreciation of the campaign by a professional soldier. As for W. Macdonald Wigfield's *The Monmouth Rebellion* (1980), this is admittedly slight, but it would have saved Clifton the necessity of citing Wade's important "Narrative" direct from the Harleian MSS. This is not to mention the work of Peter Earle, which I will come to later.

However, Clifton makes many impressive claims to originality. First, he tells us, "in discussing the rebellion I have concentrated upon two aspects: what its chances of success were at different points; and how well Monmouth led it". I would have thought that neither of these obvious points had escaped the notice of his predecessors. However, he also tells us that in considering Monmouth he has concentrated on two issues, "the main influences which shaped his character", and "the personal and political circumstances which led to his becoming a rebel". The second part of this claim is well sustained; this is the most sensible account I have yet read of Monmouth's relationship to the Whig Party and his political role from 1679 to 1685. Otherwise, speculations about the effect on him of his mother's disordered sex life and his father's over-indulgence towards him are fashionable enough in this psychiatric age, so long as we keep firmly in mind that they are the merest speculation.

In parenthesis, I query whether this emphasis on Monmouth is at all justified. There is much to be said for the argument that he was merely the occasion for rebellion, which without him might well have found some other focus, or else have flared up in the kind of major provincial riot which was not uncommon in seventeenth-century England. The tread of the book itself, as its title and subtitle suggest, is really away from Monmouth, and the long central section devoted to him jeopardizes its unity.

But on the nature of the rebellion Clifton makes further claims to originality. First, he asserts, "rather breathtakingly, that 'no previous work has examined the region where the rebellion took place'". In fact, such an examination has been *de rigueur* for almost every previous historian of the rebellion; some of them, like Bryan Little (*The Monmouth Episode*, 1956), equipped with much deeper local knowledge. True, Clifton's examination — demographic, sociological, economic, even geological — is much longer and more thorough than anything previously attempted, and it is quite interesting in itself, but I cannot see that it tells us much that is relevant to what follows, and in fact it is curiously divorced from the rest of the book.

His next claim, however, calls for more detailed analysis. He has given "considerable attention", he tells us, "to the motives and social composition of the rank and file rebels", and he hopes he has "taken discussion somewhat further than usual by asking some different questions". A long penultimate chapter is devoted to this theme, but it must be said that here he is largely repeating, and only slightly amplifying, work already carried out by Peter

and if nothing else the marked divergence in their conclusions on some points surely calls for more than one footnote reference to Earle, at the end. This is really a critique of Earle, and in fairness to both authors a greater degree of confrontation is required, which I will try and provide.

Apart from the usual narratives of the campaign, both men are necessarily reliant on the Monmouth Roll, or the "Constables' Roll" (BL Add MS 30077), the return made to the government of men absent from their parishes without known cause during the rebellion. After a brief tussle with their scholarly consciences, they both accept its substantial completeness and accuracy; this is in fact most unlikely, but their only alternative would be to put the covers back on their typewriters forthwith. From the Roll Clifton deduces an army of "barely 3,000", which he announces as a discovery; Earle is suspiciously precise, at 2,611, but admits that we know from the later jail returns that more were involved. Earle paints out that large sections of Somerset are omitted, "including such important rebel centres as Bridgewater", but seems to attribute this to negligence, accident or passive disobedience. Clifton has more elaborate but entirely unsubstantiated explanations for these lacunae, though he has a difficulty with Bridgewater itself. (A slip on Earle's part, I suspect.)

Both authors are agreed, however, that this was not a peasant revolt; recruitment from the countryside was minimal, and the rebels mainly came from the doctworking towns, which had a reservoir of unemployed or semi-employed malcontents ripe for any mischief — and deeply infected by Dissent, says Earle. Agriculture was enjoying a mild boom, and this was the time of the all-important hay harvest. (It would be platitudinous but none the less true to add that rural squires had more control over their men, and could keep a closer watch on them, than urban tradesmen.) Clifton's analysis of these points is more detailed than Earle's, though not always as lucid. For instance, according to his list there were 334 rebels from Taunton, but elsewhere he refers to sixty-one "craftsman rebels" from the town. His definition of a craftsman is not made plain, but it must be a very narrow one.

Moreover, it is impossible to reconcile Earle's conclusions on "the extremely high age of the rebels", and Clifton's argument (pp 266-7) that they were almost abnormally young. ("High age", of course, means high in seventeenth-century terms; we are talking of figures like 80 per cent over twenty-five, 55.5 per cent over thirty.) Here there is no doubt in my mind that Earle is right, in so far as anyone can be. His application of nominal linkage analysis to parish registers produces some convincing statistics, and he is careful to allow for the large number of unknowns, which Clifton (p 266) seems to think invalidates any such exercise. Here more than anywhere else he needs to confront Earle directly, but instead he slides off into the merest speculation. His one solid piece of evidence seems to be a casual remark by Sir John Reresby (in London throughout), and for the rest he simply dredges the latest trendy academic literature for random examples of contemporary teenage protest, alcoholic vandalism and sporadic riot. I take it that none of these younger scholars has been to a football match lately, or a National Front rally, or even an angry CND demonstration.

But this is a fundamental difference. Earle posits an army of mature, sensible men with dependents and households of their own, even if they were poor, going out to fight for a cause they believed in. Clifton seems to regard it as a collection of young, independent tearaways out on a "demo", some of them even indulging in an inarticulate protest against parental authority.

Earle's thesis is reinforced by his assumption, which he shares with most previous historians, that the assertion of religious Nonconformity was the most important motive; if not motive, of Monmouth's supporters. Admittedly, we need to make a few assumptions here, to which the evidence will not always stretch, but they are intelligent assumptions, based on contemporary views of the matter. Somerset and Dorset were generally regarded as centres of Nonconformity under Charles II,

ern Dissenters were the target for increased persecution in the early 1680s, and that the London government was continually doubtful of the loyalty of the area. Clifton, however, plays down this aspect of the revolt in a curious way. He admits that Somerset was the centre of militant radical Puritanism during the Civil Wars, and that it retained many of these attitudes after 1660 — in fact he makes great play with the annual commemoration at Taunton of its two sieges by the royalists, in 1644 and 1645 — yet he is reluctant to associate all this with Protestant Nonconformity.

The reason seems to be that he can only find a small number of rebels who had been prosecuted for attending conventicles. But the total figure of fifty-three such prosecutions in Somerset, 1683-4, and all drawn from four parishes, is auspiciously, nay ludicrously, low. Either Dissenters had been driven underground, or in an area which contained few Anglican nobility or gentry enforcement of the Conventicles Act was defective. Complete religious toleration was one of the planks in Monmouth's Taunton Declaration, and it is reasonable to suppose that it was this that brooded his followers, not the offer of annual Parliaments or the election of sheriffs. (No historian has inquired, and certainly Earle and Clifton do not, why Monmouth adopted these three points from the Leveller republican programme and not the rest — a broader franchise, for instance, or law reform — which might have been expected to have a wide appeal to the lower orders.)

In sum, Clifton has little to add to Earle's achievement, and in some ways he falls short of it. In the realm of surmise the latter is imbued with greater common sense, and he is the more rigorous in his handling of the sparse factual evidence. (I also like Earle's concluding remark that he would be "the first to admit the fragility of the sort of analysis" he has been conducting; an admission not matched by Clifton.) Taking a broader view, Earle's use of the Middleton Papers also gave him a better in-

sight into the planning of the expedition, whereas I suspect Clifton is too reliant on Elizabeth d'Oyley's biography of Monmouth, a poor book published as long ago as 1938.

Clifton, as is obligatory, tridges through the military campaign of 1685. He sees Monmouth's failure to press on and capture Bristol as crucial, but here he is in a numerous company. The final battle, conducted in conditions of confusion, dark and desperation on Sedgemoor, does not lend itself to rational analysis. Clifton thinks he is giving us a new account of it, but this is a delusion shared with all other historians attempting the feat. Winston Churchill's magniloquent account, in 1933, has much to recommend it, and anxious as he is to emphasize the contribution of his ancestor John Churchill, later Duke of Marlborough, he does not make the mistake of denigrating the Royalist commander, Lord Feversham. Clifton surmises that James II was disgusted with Feversham's conduct of the campaign, but he does not explain why he confirmed him as field commander in 1685. Similarly, though he contests the accepted interpretation that the Bloody Assizes roused no adverse comment until well on into the 1690s he can adduce no substantial evidence on his behalf, though I thought he might have cited Lord Chief Justice Herbert's adverse report after he had ridden the Western Assize the following spring, which is supposed to have undermined Jeffrey's credit at court.

Looking back over the bibliography of the matter, it seems that ever since George Roberts took up his pen in 1844 historians have been trying to produce a final and definitive account of Monmouth's Rebellion. They have not succeeded. Why they should try is another matter. Its only importance is indirect, in that by eliminating Monmouth it cleaned up the succession for William of Orange, and by frightening James II it persuaded him to retain a large professional army, including a small number of Catholic officers, thus setting him on the road to 1688.

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206pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.95.  
021112184

Judith Hook opens her latest, and what has proved tragically to be her last, book by reminding us that Florentine Renaissance history has for years been a "growth industry" and that there is a real need for works which seek to digest the results of the most recent research and present them to the general reader. Lorenzo de' Medici, the Magnificent, arguably "the truly representative Renaissance man", she feels is ripe for this treatment. In fact, however, while it is indeed true that considerable energy, particularly of English-speaking historians, has been devoted to Florentine history since the last war, surprisingly little of this output has been devoted to the "golden years" of Lorenzo the Magnificent. He has remained a somewhat enigmatic figure — no longer a tyrant, but the perfecter and the informal leader of a political system of oligarchical control: no longer the outstanding patron of great artists, the creator of a golden age, but still the leader of an intensely cultured society.

The nuances of this much more complicated picture than that conjured up by Fabroni, Roscoe, and even Armstrong are indeed difficult to capture, and this has perhaps been a discouragement to scholars. But, more significantly, the project to collect and publish all the surviving letters of Lorenzo, first conceived in the 1930s by Palmarocchi, has preoccupied scholars and made it difficult to envisage a new complete biography until the edited correspondence was available. The validity of this restraint is fully borne out by Dr Hook's new biography. That is not to say that because the edition of the letters is not yet finished this is a premature work. Hook has not tried to write a definitive biography but rather "an introductory survey of the new Lorenzo". As such her book exploits intelligently and effectively the new material which has emerged for the first half of Lorenzo's career, while treating the post-1480 period with much greater brevity and less certainty.

So we have a book very much in two halves. The problems which confronted Lorenzo when, as a very young man, he succeeded in 1469 to the position of *princeps inter pares* held by his father and grandfather, are etched in deftly and sensitively. Hook observes well the "intensely patriarchal and passionately corporate" nature of Florentine politics, and succeeds in getting Lorenzo's role in Florentine government into true perspective with constant reference to the influence of senior, experienced politicians on the young man, and to the essentially oligarchical nature of the Medici regime. Lorenzo rarely took decisions on his own; he was surrounded both by senior patri- cians and by chosen and trusted aides. At the same time he was frequently opposed, not just by those excluded from the regime who denounced him as a tyrant, but by allies who contested the value and resented the cost of particular policies. Throughout the 1470s Lorenzo headed a pro-Milonese faction in

Florentine politics, but there were many in the Florentine ruling class who had a greater affinity for Venice. After 1480 Lorenzo took on a new role as the defender of an entente with Naples, a position which for a time left him particularly isolated as King Ferrante had few other supporters in Florence.

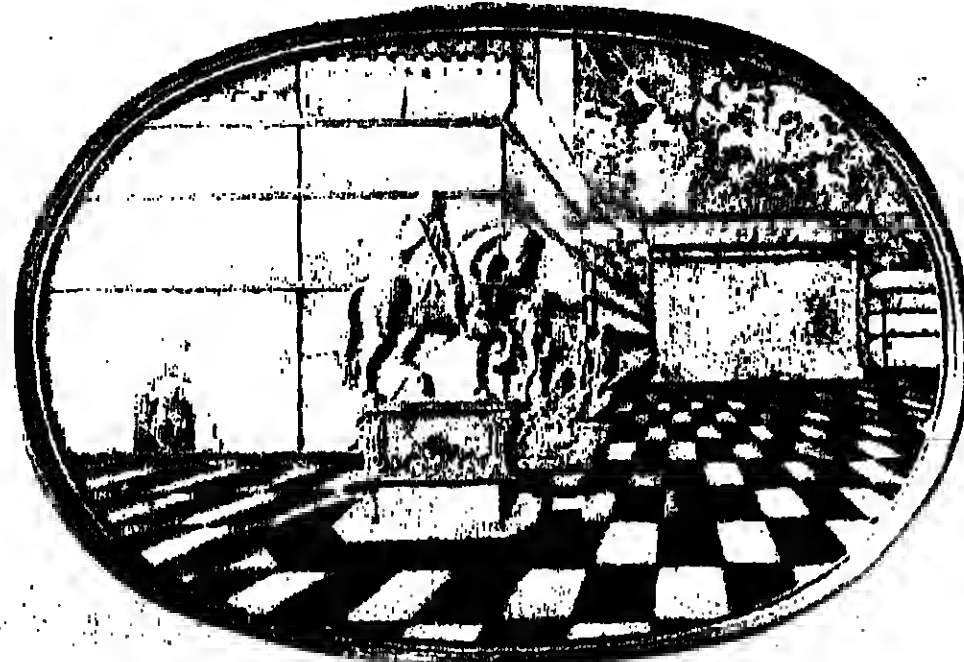
This is just one of the problems of the years immediately following 1480 which Hook glimpses but is not really able to substantiate. For her the end of the Pazzi war is still a turning-point when Lorenzo, returning from his dramatic peace mission to Naples, began steadily to strengthen his political position at home and his reputation as a statesman and diplomat abroad. But, in fact, the peace of 1480 was anything but a triumph for Lorenzo or for Florence; it was followed by a prolonged and humiliating struggle to get Ferrante to honour his verbal promises, by bitter dispute in Florence about the raising of taxation necessary to pay the foreign mercenary captains to

which the leagues of the period committed him, and by further totally unsatisfactory peace in 1484 and 1486.

At the dividing point in her book, 1480, Hook inserts two chapters which deal with Lorenzo's cultural patron and writer. These are judicious and useful; they concentrate on emphasizing the view that Lorenzo's cultural interests and his political and social activities have to be looked at together; that his skills as a writer, poet and philosopher were essential to his success as a negotiator and politician, and his reputation as a man of outstanding taste and artistic understanding was a crucial facet of the general esteem in which he was held.

It has to be said, however, that this is not a hook for the purists. There are a number of wrong citations in the footnotes and the text is marred by small errors. We are told of a two-month stay of Lorenzo in Naples in 1466 during which he engaged in "solid political bargaining" and a "constant round of court festivities". But, in fact, he was in Naples for four days, arriving on April 14 and leaving on the 18. The peace between Sixtus IV and the powers of the League which ended the first stage of the war of Ferrara was concluded not at Cremona in 1483 but in Rome in December 1482. The meeting of princes and representatives of the powers of the new Holy League at Cremona in February 1483, which Lorenzo attended as Florentine emissary, was held to discuss plans for the coming year's campaign against the Venetians. Finally, there is little evidence that Lorenzo wrote to his wife Clarice "regularly and no matter how tired he was, normally with his own hand", as only five such letters have survived for the period 1469-80, and of these only one is autograph. However, this probably does not seriously weaken Hook's argument that Lorenzo was a committed family man and more devoted to his wife than has often been thought.

No one who knew Judy Hook doubted her abilities as a scholar, and Renaissance historical scholarship is the poorer for her tragic death. What she showed in this book was a style, both in narrative and analysis, which catches the imagination and does credit to her subject. With all its defects it is undoubtedly the best biography of Lorenzo to appear in English for thirty years.



A seventeenth-century view of Piazza della Signoria in gold and semi-precious stones, reproduced from Patterns in Late Medici Art Patronage by Edward L. Goldberg (425pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £46.40. 0691 0533833).

## Outwards from the poet

George Holmes

CHARLES DAVIS  
Dante's Italy: and other essays  
342pp. University of Pennsylvania Press.  
£29.75.  
0812278836

Much recent Dante scholarship has veered away from the study of Dante's immediate historical environment. Medieval literature in general and scholastic philosophy, to which Dante has an extremely enigmatic and in some respects rather distant relationship, have been plundered for explanations of his vision and his ideas. But the experiences and acquaintances of a man living in Florence in 1300 have attracted less attention than used to be the case. Charles Davis, a historian with a strong sense of chronological reality, is an exception to this general rule. His speciality has been to work outwards from Dante to people close to him who may have influenced him directly and in any case formed part of the milieu in which he lived. This collection of learned articles presents conveniently a large proportion of the results of his researches.

Dante's constant originality and his poetic treatment of thought make it extremely difficult to pin down the sources of his ideas. For example, Davis has been one of the chief resuscitators of Renigo de' Girolami, a learned Dominican friar and a member of a prominent Florentine family, who was certainly a lecturer and preacher at Santa Maria Novella, had very probably been heard by Dante, and wrote a primitive tract denouncing city factions which Dante would have approved of. But he is not mentioned in Dante's works. He was almost unknown before manuscripts of his writings began to be investigated in this century. More-

over, his attitude to the political position of the Papacy is very different from that taken in Dante's *Monarchia*. Was Dante influenced by his ideas? We can only guess. Another puzzling figure in Dante's background, the subject of two essays in this volume which give the best introduction to him in English, is Ptolemy of Lucca. Ptolemy, also a Dominican, was prior of Santa Maria Novella in 1301, Dante's last year in Florence. He wrote history and political philosophy, and completed Aquinas's unfinished *De Regimine Principum*. Among other things he was the most prominent reviver of Roman republican ideology in thirteenth-century Italy. Davis connects this development convincingly with the policy of the Orsini Pope Nicholas III in 1278. He finds it more difficult to connect Ptolemy's ideas with Dante's keen interest in ancient Rome. Again the precise background remains elusive.

As far as tracing Dante's sources is concerned Davis has more success with Brunetto

Latini, the Florentine notary and politician, whom Dante placed, probably with good reason, among the sodomites in *Inferno*, but to whom he affected the deepest filial indebtedness. The reasons for this veneration probably included Brunetto's influence on his idea that true nobility was a matter of inner virtue rather than inherited position and perhaps a more general obligation to an outstanding vulgarizer of ancient philosophy and a man who managed to combine learned writing and political action more successfully than anyone else in Florence. Brunetto, like Guido Cavalcanti, links Dante with the ideas around him in the city.

The beginnings of Italian political thought have been one of Davis's main interests. Another has been the connection between Dante's ideas and those of the contemporary Franciscan Spirituals. There is good reason for this quest because, like Brunetto, a Franciscan radical, Ubertino da Casale, has a place which is difficult to define exactly in the *Comedy*.

Ubertino was the author of the *Arbor Vitae Crucifixa*, an apocalyptic work which condemned recent popes. Davis shows that Dante was probably indebted to the Spirituals for his enthusiasm for clerical poverty, though not for his extreme idea that the Church should be totally without any claim to property. They probably influenced his identification of recent popes with the whore dallying with kings and his expectation of a future saviour, the *veluto*. Once again the precise route of influence is impossible to detect. Dante's evil popes include Nicholas III, in whom Ubertino had no interest, and his *veluto* has as much to do with imperialist ideas as with radical religion. Dante never takes over ideas without transforming and intermingling them.

The other main area of interest exhibited in this volume is the "Mallapini Question", was the chronicle of thirteenth-century Florence attributed to Ricordano and Giacotto Mallapini written in that century — in which case it is an important early source — or was it copied out of existing works much later? The question is relevant to Dante because the *Comedy* is a detailed view of Florentine history, the idea of a decline from earlier purity and uprightness which he paraded in the *Comedy* and which he had probably developed during his dismal years of exile. It could theoretically have been inspired by Mallapini. In recent years Davis has been the most tireless defender of the view that Mallapini is a late compilation. Opponents keep coming up but, reading him on this subject again, it is difficult to doubt that he is right. Dante was an important influence on the historian Villani, from whom Mallapini borrowed, and his *tempo unico* is another example of his influence on originality. Davis's work cannot achieve the impossible task of explaining the originality but it has been an enormous help in clarifying its intellectual setting.

MARION LOMAX

## Brothers in villainy

John Fairleigh

LAURIE TAYLOR  
In the Underworld  
188pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £7.95.  
063113489 X

Any contemporary criminologist, schooled in the conflicting grand theories on the causes of crime, must be tempted to leave his desk and search out a few practitioners to ask them, straight out, why they do it. Not knowing this kind of person in a social way, Laurie Taylor, Professor of Sociology at the University of York, recruited John McVicar, formerly "public enemy no. 1", to introduce him to some of his old mates. The result of this collaboration, *In the Underworld*, is offered as a special insight into the lives and motivations of professional criminals. Professor Taylor also attempts to make the broader point that when you are in the big time you are not alone; he argues for the existence of a network of criminals of not more than "a couple of hundred fully paid up members", many of whom are known to one another, who share a common set of values and who are ready to look after one another rather as if they belonged to the same Masonic Lodge.

As an insight into the criminal world the book is a failure. The initial grandiose plan to get a representative sample of individuals involved in major crime to talk freely about themselves and their work had to be abandoned. Instead, Taylor has to make do with the half-dozen or so people that McVicar could manage to flush out, who were either sufficiently extrovert or foolhardy enough to meet a sociologist and talk into his cassette recorder. Most of his informants could not resist the temptation to show off a bit and spin a few tales of their techniques and villainy, but the revelations add up to no more than what they might

have told a friendly probation officer or someone they had just met in a pub. Who could have expected otherwise? A professional villain who opened his heart to a prying sociologist of brief acquaintance would not survive long as a 'fairground pickpocket, let alone as a grand master of the criminal underworld.

Even if members of this far from random sample of villains were prepared to reveal all, we would hear little of their story because Taylor frequently interrupts. The value of going native, long recognized by anthropologists but slow to be absorbed into the other social sciences, is that given time the people you are studying might come to accept you and help you to see their world through their eyes rather than yours. Clearly, Taylor finds difficulty in assuming this mantle of academic detachment; he asks questions and then interjects his own interpretations of crime while the informant is trying to answer; and when he is transcribing the tapes we are further distracted by value-laden observations such as "the extravagant display of bad taste" of a bank robber's domestic interior. He also keeps assuring us that although he does get quite a *frisson* out of the excitement and the daring of certain aspects of crime he is aware of the victim and he totally disapproves of violence.

In this muddle of recorded conversations and comment no one manages to tell his own story. We are left with a study that is neither an objective analysis of serious crime nor a first-hand account of the criminal way of life; nor is it satisfactorily established that there really is a tightly knit brotherhood of crime, supposedly meeting in convivial assembly at one of a few addresses around central London. Obviously, among people who have put themselves outside the law, there must be some camaraderie and many common interests; notably the common interest is not getting caught. But even within Taylor's small sample there are fiercely guarded specialisms and many fears and rival-

ries between individuals. Add to this the temptation to "grass" to save your own skin, ruefully recognized by some of Taylor's informants, and it is clear that the bonds that bind the criminal fraternity are fragile indeed.

How did it happen that a Professor of Sociology worked so hard in his own specialist field and uncovered so little? The answer must be that he discarded the traditional role of objective observer and analyst without finding the skills to submerge himself and become the confidant of the people whose lives he wished to explore. Nothing so clearly illustrates this failure to gain acceptance, and thereby some truth about the criminal world, as the history of his collaboration with McVicar. McVicar had been, and at the time of the writing of the book still was, part of a network of people who are involved in crime. Taylor recruited him as a "fellow sociologist" to co-author the book, but failed to understand the loyalty to old friends and old ways that McVicar still held despite his new status as sociology graduate and writer. When Taylor began to reveal the way in which he was using McVicar's old friends as fodder for sociological analysis, McVicar felt increasingly compromised and finally withdrew from the joint authorship (becoming instead another subject in Taylor's rambling transcriptions and interpretations).

As the relationship crumbles, so does the credibility of Taylor as a reporter of McVicar's world. If McVicar, who began as a friend and collaborator, did not trust Taylor to tell the true story, can we believe that other informants, mere acquaintances, felt able to trust him and to part with personal and professional secrets? Taylor records that McVicar told him during one of their tetchy encounters that the real criminal is "play acting for most people, because his real life, what he really is, is hidden from most people". As usual, Taylor was not listening.

## The psychopath as star

Clancy Sigal

JOE MCGINNIS  
Fatal Vision  
663pp. André Deutsch. £12.95.  
0233976493  
JACK OLSEN  
"Son": A psychopath and his victims  
433pp. Constable. £12.50.  
009463770 X

The *New Yorker* recently published a cartoon showing a woman on the phone: "I don't think we should invite Claus von Bulow, darling. It seems he might not have done it after all." One of the fastest ways to celebrity and social acceptance in America right now is to murder someone, preferably a woman. If you are fairly presentable, the more women you kill or rape the more likely you are to get your photograph in the paper, to be interviewed by publicity-hungry psychologists and to sell the movie rights to your crime.

Dr Jeffrey MacDonald's high school graduating class voted him not only Most Popular but also Most Likely to Succeed. A plausible super-achiever, he attended an Ivy League university, did his internship at a good New York hospital and then volunteered for the Green Berets. Handsome, talented, athletic, he was almost too good to be true, as Joe McGinnis notes in his gruelling chronicle of the long-running legal circus that opened when MacDonald's wife Colette and his two small daughters were murdered one night at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

From the start this cute "boy next door" claimed that "the murders had been committed by a band of Mason-like intruders" who had stabbed him and knocked him unconscious and then killed pregnant Colette and the two little girls. The Army's investigators botched their hunt for clues, and their case against MacDonald was probably as "grossly incompetent" as McGinnis suggests. But Colette's father and mother, who idolized Jeffrey and sprang to his defence, gradually came to the conclusion, on the basis of his conflicting statements, that he had killed their daughter and

hatred, and they pursued MacDonald through military and civilian courts until, nine years later, he was sentenced to three consecutive life terms. Freed on a technicality, MacDonald resumed his medical practice in California where even today he is toasted by well-wishers and friends, including the local police, who give fund-raising banquets under the rubric "FREE THE FORT BRAGG ONE". His patients soberly compare him to Albert Schweitzer.

According to McGinnis, whose outrageously padded book constitutes another trial-by-print of MacDonald, the ex-Green Beret doctor has become as hooked on notoriety as he was addicted (McGinnis insists) to an amphetamine which drove him into the murderous frenzy. Hundreds of women have written to him with offers of sex and even marriage; the favourite talk-show host of intellectuals, Dick Cavett, had him on television; and MacDonald keeps pushing for Robert Redford to play him in the movie of his life.

Most of the 663 pages of *Fatal Vision* are verbatim quotes from transcripts of MacDonald's various trials. The author has interviewed the accused, though not very profitably, and dug around a little to arrive of his own verdict. The book incessantly exploits the bloody details of the multiple murders. This, and the utter lack of original analysis, which might have helped us to make a little sense of the crime or the criminal, mean that the book is merely another ornament on MacDonald's Christmas tree of self-aggrandizing publicity.

The only way McGinnis has of raising MacDonald's formidable charm ("He'll say anything to anybody") is to set himself up, not unfairly convincingly, as judge and jury. A dismal air of collusion hangs over the whole repulsive enterprise.

Fred Coe, the subject of "Son": A psychopath and his victims, and Jeff MacDonald

local women until he virtually told Spokane's bumbling police where to find him — by handing his calling-card to a victim. On being finally jailed and sentenced to seventy-five years, Coe of course settled down happily to a new career of self-promotion. Like MacDonald, he is his own best agent.

Fred's idols were Hugh Hefner and Dean Martin. But the dominant force in his life was his mother, Ruth, who most often fantasized herself as a cross between Scarlett O'Hara, complete with false southern accent, and something out of Tennyson. His father, Gordon, was the respected managing editor of one of Spokane's two major daily newspapers. Instead of attempting to make interesting links between the multiple rapist's respectable origins and his crimes, Olsen (like McGinnis) drags in coveys of alleged authorities to do some highly dubious psychoanalysis of Coe Junior. As usual, Mum, "who tyrannized her son Fred and her husband Gordon", gets the blame. (True, she did try to hire a professional killer to eliminate the judge and prosecutor in her son's trial.)

Olsen frequently uses turgid and unattributed quotations. One rape victim "felt as if the earth had opened and revealed a huge maggot". During another rape Coe "slid down her body and began licking. It felt oddly passionless. . . . This slaphad journalism is made grosser by pointless reiteration of the rapist's method: 'The madman was nibbling himself against her, fingering her, licking and nibbling her nipples and her genitals.'"

Both these books are best-sellers in the United States where the appetite for reading about violence against women seems insatiable. The currently fashionable expert on Oedipally-motivated crime is Dr Hervé Cleckley, whose *The Mask of Sanity* is quoted by both McGinnis and Olsen. But if we really want to understand the Sutcliffes, MacDonalds and Coes of this world, we may have to step away from all this titillating gore and from the stale axioms of sixth-form psychoanalysis, and allow asymptotic imagination to replace so-called "expert testimony" and the insights of

## Where the money wasn't

Eric Korn

JOHN TREHERNE  
The Strange History of Bonnie and Clyde  
245pp. Cape. £8.95.  
022402146 X

"Because that's where the money is"; it doesn't need an economic historian to tell us why bank robbers rob banks. But the banks are made of marble, with a guard on every door, and beyond large the money stays where it is. Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were certainly economic failures. John Treherne suggests they may never have taken more than \$2,500 in a single raid throughout their bloody two-year spree, which was hardly enough to pay the monumental gas bills (though they often stole gas too); on one spectacularly futile foray into Missouri in late 1932 they took \$115 at Oranago (split four ways), and then raided another bank which had closed down some days earlier.

Their raids were poorly planned and clumsily executed: things went awry through bad communications, sometimes bad luck, most often panic. Their get-away arrangements involved some spectacular driving but had no other merit. They survived only because there was virtually no co-operation between the police of different state or city jurisdictions.

They were good, it must be allowed, at killing people, starting with the elderly shopkeeper John Bucher, shot for no apparent reason when doing what the robbers told him; Sheriff's Deputy who grew curious about the odd behaviour of four strangers at an Oklahoma village square dance, shot in panic before he had drawn his gun; Howard Hall, shot for twenty-eight dollars and a bologna sausage; Doyle Johnson, shot on Christmas Day 1932, after he made the mistake of interfering when the gang was trying to steal his car: it was a sort of induction exercise for their new chum, W. D. Jones, but Jones, although he claimed to be a whizz car thief, couldn't start the car even though the key was in the ignition, and he and Barrow were trying to push-start it when Doyle came out of his house to see what was happening to his wife's present. After him, the gang stuck to killing policemen, not in itself a valid revolutionary statement.

After months of wretchedness, rare excitement, pain and privation and incompetent butchery, they were (probably) betrayed by an accomplice and his father, blown to pieces in an ambush, and the car with their broken bodies unceremoniously hauled off by a tow truck. On the way it broke down outside a schoolhouse, and the children rushed out and fought for mementoes — strands of Bonnie's dress or bloody locks of hair.

John Treherne tells the whole unedifying story from wretched childhood to wretched death, to bloody fame and posthumous glory, with clarity, level-headedness and — apart from some feeble excursions on the nature of the psychopathic personality — with economy. He has disentangled the contradictory accounts of the ambush (most of the participants were either misinformed or had something to hide). He also recounts, without satisfactorily explaining, the extraordinary growth of the Bonnie and Clyde legend. He has read widely (the bibliography includes *Farewell, Mr Gangster! America's War on Crime and Legendary Ladies of Texas*) and seen all the movies, including an awful-sounding bit of rubbish made for J. Edgar Hoover's self-advertisement machine, in which the fictional Clyde is driven into exile to satisfy his wife's uncontrollable urge for perfume. No greater a distortion, though, than that of David Newman and Robert Benton, script-writers for the Beatty-Dunaway movie.

If Bonnie and Clyde were here today, they would be hip. Their values have become assimilated into much of our culture — not robbing banks and killing people, of course, but their style, their sexuality, their bravado, their delicacy, their cultivated arrogance, their narcissistic insecurity, their curious ambitions. More wholesome is the family piety of Bonnie's epitaph, a monumental misstatement: "As the flowers are made sweeter by the sunshine and the dew, so this world is made brighter

John Co 136



# Viewpoint: The state of Poland

Philip Peters

C'est un grand mal que le chef d'une nation soit l'ennemi né de la liberté, dont il devrait être le défenseur. Ce mal, à mon avis, n'est pas tellement inhérent à cette place qu'on ne pût l'en détacher, ou du moins l'amoindrir considérablement.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau  
*Considérations sur le Gouvernement de la Pologne*

In June 1984, elections of some significance were held in Poland. What mattered was not the choice of candidates – though there was some choice – but rather whether electors had endorsed the régime by voting at all, or whether they followed the opposition recommendation of a boycott. One of the remarkable things was the truly admirable candour of the official propaganda in favour of electoral participation and of the régime. By contrast with the frankness of General Jaruzelski's posters, party political announcements in the West seem like mealy-mouthed, wishy-washy, evasive hypocrisy.

The poster I specially liked showed a map of Eastern Europe, with the boundaries of Poland heavily underscored in red. Poland is not located in the middle of the map, but rather to the left, so that the map as a whole gives a clear impression of the enormous size of Poland's eastern neighbour, though the name or boundaries of this neighbour are not underscored. A rather sugary little girl is pointing at the map, and at Poland in particular. The caption says, *Mamy tylko jedną Polskę* (We have but one Poland).

The message could hardly be clearer. It is *this* Poland or none at all. If you wish to play at heroes, you will end up with no Poland at all. And the insinuation is: that little girl, and countless other innocents like her, will perish. A very large number of civilian non-combatants perished in the Warsaw rising. How many would it be this time?

There was another poster which was even more explicit, though perhaps not so very striking. It consisted of a quotation from a speech of Jaruzelski's. In brief translation, his statement is: a Poland between the Bug and the Oder either has a socialist future, or no future at all.

Once upon a time people who upheld the socialist ideal believed it to have universal human validity, without geographical restrictions. The present statement on the contrary implies that if only Poland had the good fortune to be in Patagonia or near Timbuctoo or some other place, the principles of its social organization might well be the subject of rational discussion and of choice. But Poland being situated where it is, owing to the incredible lack of judgment and foresight on the part of early medieval Poles, the social structure of Poland cannot really be *sub judice*.

The new Peace of Westphalia which was in effect set up at Yalta and Potsdam, and which crystallized in the subsequent years, established the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*. But there is a difference between the Second and the First Counter-Reformation. The First Counter-Reformation did succeed in crushing, in many places for centuries, the effervescence and vitality which had preceded it. Extensive parts of southern and central Europe, full of vigour during the Renaissance, sank into torpor. For a few years, a pessimist might have supposed and anticipated that the Second Counter-Reformation, coming from the east, would be as effective as the one which had come from the south. But, contrary to such pessimistic expectations, the world seems to have changed. Cultural isolation and insulation do not seem feasible in an age of extensive international trade and general commitment to economic growth.

It is a curious fact that the institution surviving from the First Counter-Reformation is such an effective antidote to the second. Note, incidentally, that the Church in Poland is not Thomist. Its theology, or at any rate the part making an intellectual impact, is phenomenological. Husserl not Aquinas provides the faith with its idiom.

The present situation in mid-Eastern Europe, to coin a term, is basically the result of the interaction of the new peace of Westphalia with a socio-economic situation which no longer permits effective cultural insulation. The

result is an astonishing and drastic new form of a dualism between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*. The *pays légal* is a consequence of the terms of the peace and of the division of the world which it imposes, and of the fact that the principle *cuius regio eius religio* is not merely agreed, but constitutes an organizational imperative. A great superpower happens to be, for very deep historical reasons, anxious and fear-ridden about its safety, continues to think in territorial terms and considers certain neighbouring areas to be absolutely essential for its own security. Now in some regions and some periods of history, it is possible to maintain alliances and dominations (or combinations of the two) without imposing a uniformity of belief system; and in other cases it is possible to impose a belief system and to make it stick.

The peculiarity of the present situation is that neither of these options is available, for good and interrelated reasons. The great superpower can only impose its alliance/dominance through a hegemonic party, with a monopoly of power and near-monopoly of political theory. If this crumbles, the alliance, the domination and the security go. Yet everything about the socio-economic culture of these societies goes against that hegemony and against the ideocratic monopoly. The two great gentry nations of Eastern Europe are now thoroughly embourgeoisied; and the third nation of the triangle has always been profoundly petit-bourgeois anyway. So their natural bent now is towards efficiency and pluralism, and the new version of Byzantine caesarism is profoundly alien to them. Yet the more alien it is to their natural culture, the more does the maintenance of the security-giving alliance depend on the maintenance of the exclusive hegemonic party, which would be swept into insignificance if it conceded freedom of association. It is all a vicious circle, and it is desperately difficult, or perhaps impossible, to break out of it.

These are the basic data of the situation, its fundamental and tragic constraints. But note that these bases do not dictate or impose a unique solution, a unique outcome. Quite the reverse: there is a marked variety. The separation of the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* is of course visible and mandatory in each case. The political superstructure and the civil society underneath are inevitably separate, in each case. But how very different their relationship is to each other! In the case of that most pitiful of central European nations, the civil society is apathetic, broken and dispirited. It barely resists at all. Its members largely accommodate themselves by means of an inner immigration. Czech, caution also, contrasts with Polish panache in the financial sphere: the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has not plunged into international debt, but practises its communism with petty bourgeois thrift. By contrast, in that once most turbulent and ill-disciplined of Danubian nations, all seems harmony and light, almost, at any rate on the surface. The *pays légal* and the *pays réel* are in collision, the former implicitly assuring the latter that it will obtain for it the maximum possible degree of political and economic freedom, and in return receiving a generous measure of support from the civil society. The marvellous slogan "He who is not against us is for us" ensures quite a good measure of mutual toleration. The deal is not completely satisfactory, of course, but as long as the background constraints continue to operate, the solution seems to be widely accepted.

It is in Poland that the discrepancy between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* seems most unstable, potentially most explosive and least harmonious. A good case can of course be made out either for giving the *pays légal* the benefit of the doubt, or equally for refusing to do so. The trouble is that presumably no one is really in a position to know which of these two plausible cases is valid. The Pétain figure at the top no doubt has his *hispense intime*, but does anyone know what it is? Does he himself? What does go on in the head of an old general, in charge of a country and trying to save it from alien occupation? With hindsight we know that nothing very much went on in the head of the dastard of Vlehy, devoid of *persuade*; whether *intime* or other, and certainly Jaruzelski's head looks a more plausible candidate for serious strategic thought. How much leeway for manoeuvre he has is difficult to judge from outside.

The old joke can of course be adapted: what is the difference between Russia and Poland? Answer: in Russia no one can speak his mind except for Chernenko, and in Poland everyone can speak his mind except Jaruzelski. But what is in that mind is a state secret, perhaps kept also from himself. If only one knew whether he intends to take Poland to Prague or to Budapest, one would know whether the rational case for support is cogent or not. But does he know, and will he really have a choice when the pressure of events develops? And in any case, the question is a bit hypothetical: there are many who do not ask themselves the question, and oppose him as if they knew he was bound for Prague and not for Budapest, or without caring much where he thinks he is bound.

But there is an enormous amount of free speech in Poland. Not on the mass media, but in day-to-day conversation, and even in meetings. An officially sponsored conference took place earlier this year in Warsaw, on the place of Europe in the world, roughly speaking. Naturally, being run by Poles, the conference was on this subject and on the Polish question.

The official opening speeches were interesting, for once. They were about European civilization. Speeches about European civilization *à la polonaise* are rather amusing. They run roughly as follows: European civilization is a rich, wonderful and creative thing, etc. It has been going on for a long time. It has produced many marvels of art, science, etc. etc. We Poles have contributed to it greatly, Copernicus, Chopin, etc. We have added to it, we have defended it, we have fought for it, we belong to it. (Unlike some other people we can think of.) That last sentence in parenthesis is not actually spoken out loud, but it is invariably the loudest sentence in the speech.

While that sentence is not actually spoken, certain other astonishing sentences do actually come to be spoken out loud and clear in an official conference, which is reported and highlighted on the local television. *Europe from Brest to Brest*. Europe so defined would appear to exclude certain friends and brothers. The general theme of the conference is absolutely plain: the relationships between the superpowers may go up and down, but that should not be allowed to affect our unambiguous and firm incorporation in Europe, and Europe ends at Brest-Litovsk.

Other people vote with their feet. Poles also vote with their moustaches. Slav-macho moustaches are terribly common. They are simultaneously reminiscent of the feudal *volvo* faces that stare at one from so many historic portraits, and of Lech Walasa. The moustache linking feudalism and syndicalism?

At the point where the Carpathians are highest, there is one of the loveliest little mountain rock ranges in Europe. Snow lingers in the gulleys and on the ridges and on the north faces well into the summer. The granite looks hard and sound. Lenin himself had climbed one of its highest peaks when holidaying in a nearby village, which rather suggests, if his jealous predecessor Kerevsky was right about Lenin's physical cowardice, that the easiest route to a summit cannot be too dangerous. (There is a museum commemorating Lenin's holiday stay in the village which he honoured by his presence.) But though Lenin's route to the top may or may not have been dangerous, there are plenty of splendid and steep rock buttresses which must offer superb sport.

Now here is a strange thing. In the course of four days' wandering in this range, it was possible not to encounter one (not one) mountaineering party, not a single nylon rope, not a single ica axe. Not a single pylon was beard being banged into the rock. And the days did include some good weather. How is this possible? There is only one possible explanation. Though the spoken word is free in Poland, mountaineering is not. Presumably all mountaineering activities have to pass through some single organization, which only leads groups out under supervision, at appointed times and in appropriate places. Freelance mountain climbing must be out. Perhaps it would inevitably be a cover for other things.

Clearly, it simply isn't possible, some early morning when the weather forecast is good, for a young Poles to ring up a friend and say: listen, Leszek, the weather is promising; the petro-

tank of my motorbike is full, why don't I pick you up in twenty minutes, and I can show you that marvellous new Hard Severn as the north-west buttress of Rysy, which I was taken up the other week. It has a crux which really will amuse you. We ought to be on the summit by 4 pm, in time to get back to the hut before nightfall. Remember, that summit was climbed by Lenin. In ha.

Evidently, no such telephone calls can occur.

The great old southern capital has come to constitute a kind of parable. This beautiful old town did not really suffer from the war. When the Red Army bypassed and surrounded the German garrison, they forgot to cut off the only to the south, and the Germans escaped in that direction, rather than defending and destroying the town. During the first post-war referendum, intended to endorse the new social order and the new boundaries, the deeply bourgeois city voted "No". To punish it, and to dilute the bourgeoisie with a more progressive, working-class element, a couple of enormous industrial complexes were built very close by.

The effects were not quite as intended. The imported working class, far from being properly progressive, became solid supporters of the independent trade union movement. The heavy industry was evidently no economic success at all, but on top of that it turned out to be an ecological disaster. The air pollution legends are achieving what eight centuries and the German invasion did not achieve: the old houses are, it is said, crumbling under its impact. It may be a parable, or it may be true, but it is widely believed, which in itself is significant enough.

For administrative convenience, the Germans even added a new building to the castle. Though not a thing of great beauty, it is reasonably in keeping with the nineteenth-century aspect of the surroundings, and is not as acutely resented as the Stalinoid Palace of Culture by the new capital.

Every hour, one of the poignant rituals of Polish nationalism is re-enacted. A bolder plays what sounds like a lament from a tower, breaking off suddenly in the middle to commemorate that thirteenth-century occasion when the original trumpet solo was bravely interrupted by some Mongolian hooligans from the East.

There is very, very little in the way of cultural symbolism of the forced alignment, to the railway stations and similar places, there are signs in German and in English. On the monumental paths, there are signs in German and in Magyar. But there are very few in the language of the great fraternal nation.

In the absence of effective local currency, you can buy things in the main only for love or dollars. Personal relations and networks are of supreme importance. A Western social scientist researching in the country assured me that kin and quasi-kin networks, not dissident trade unions, are the real key institution of the land. Under Communism generally, loose personal relations flourish; elsewhere, in the Soviet Union for instance, one feels that this is the great psychic requirement arising from the great premium put on real mutual trust. In Poland, in daily life makes trust less essential; the importance of personal relations may arise from economic more than the emotional need.

The conflict between those who would and those who would not give the benefit of the doubt to the local Pétain simply cuts across party membership and non-membership. There are "realists" outside the party, and later opponents inside. Among those who oppose (this is a fact noticeable among earlier years), there is a kind of stratification by period. Exile, Stalinists, like wines, come in different years, and the year of their personal de-Stalinization, and the various years differ a great deal from each other. What is interesting is that diverse signs often cannot stand each other. Earlier winners are liable to treat later ones as soundly opportunists.

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## Letters

### The Kensington Rune Stone

Sir, – It is perfectly true, as Glenn Crittan writes (Letters, August 3), that "there is a strong sentiment in Minnesota in favour of the authenticity of the Kensington Rune Stone". There are strong sentiments in many parts of America concerning pre-Columbian visitors from Scandinavia, Wales, Ireland, Greece, Atlantis, China, Egypt, Israel and Spain. I was in Minnesota last year and was fascinated that Alexandria, where the Kensington Stone is enshrined in the local museum, describes itself as "the birthplace of America" and has a giant Viking statue in its main street.

But archaeologists and historians are concerned with facts not sentiments. It has been shown conclusively by runic scholars that the Kensington Stone is a forgery and, indeed, we have despatched confessions from the forger's family who thought it a great "Ha-ha" as it, sadly, was. Professor Hall is a Romance scholar who has no competence to deal with matters runic or archaeological and his book has been devastatingly demolished by the Scandinavian scholar Erik Wahlgren, in *Antiquity*, and Raymond Page in *Speculum*.

That the Vikings got to America is beyond question: that they left archaeological evidence of their visits was doubtful until the excavations at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland, and in Ellesmere Land. And then there is the coin from Maine. More archaeological evidence of Vikings in America may well be found, but not, probably, in Minnesota. The Scandinavians in America are inventing their past, as so many do on both sides of the Atlantic. Hilda Davidson was right to refer to the earnest or mischievous attempts to establish the Viking presence in North America (July 6). There is plenty of mischief abroad, and, I suspect, a runic factory in New England. The Viking inscription of the Newport Tower (a colonial myth) is earnest but sentimental. Glyn Daniel.

Sir John's College, Cambridge.

### 'The Ancient Greeks'

Sir, – Howard Kaminsky's complaint (Letters, July 20) about Paul Cartledge's review (June 29) of John Fioe's *The Ancient Greeks* shows precisely why we need more reviews like Cartledge's. In particular, Kaminsky's claim, "But the enrichments are just that, valuable insofar as they improve the political narrative", points up the absurd position historians have got themselves into through uncritically accepting assumptions of earlier generations. How can Kaminsky justify his belief that all other areas of historical enquiry are epiphenomenal to political history? Asserting that "the culture of that civilization . . . radiated from its political axis" will not do, since it betokens the nineteenth-century notion that only political history constitutes "real" history. Marxists might say that culture radiated from the economic axis, historians of religion would claim the theological axis, while functionalists would probably deny the existence of any one axis at all.

Of course, political history has legitimate claims to scholarly consideration; but not, as is too often still the case, at the expense of other considerations. The Western habit of emphasizing politics at the expense of all else has positively ruined the study of non-Western societies, and wreaked havoc even with the study of the West; anthropological and sociological considerations are only now beginning to rescue us from this lugubrious morass. As long as books like Fioe's and letters like Kaminsky's continue to get written in profusion, the study of history is doomed to a blinkered bondage to the previous century.

C. BERT PHILLIPS  
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### Conflict in Cyprus

Sir, – C. M. Woodhouse lavishes considerable praise on Cyprus by Christopher Hitchens (July 13). I am unable to share his enthusiasm. In my view many of the accounts in the book are misleading and partisan. This is especially

true of the chapter, "The Axe and the Waads", in which the events of the early 1960s are described in a manner which seems designed to remove all blame from Makarios.

For the sake of brevity I will concentrate on the account of the Kokkina offensive which began on August 6, 1964:

More fighting broke out in the summer as the Greek Cypriots attempted to close down the *Turkish military enclave* at Kokkina, and Turkish planes replied by showering neighbouring villages with high explosive and napalm (p 57; my italics).

The group of villages in question was not a "Turkish military enclave", but an area inhabited at that time entirely by Turkish Cypriot villagers (formerly mixed, but predominantly Turkish Cypriot).

Kokkina was the only practical outlet to the sea for the Turkish Cypriots, and was therefore of great importance to them, especially in view of the refusal of the Makarios régime to allow food and medical supplies through to the Turkish Cypriots. The enclave was defended by a force which consisted largely of Turkish Cypriot students, pathetically ill-prepared for the continuous artillery bombardment to which they were subjected by the Greek Cypriot National Guard.

The Turkish jets attacked only after repeated attempts on the part of the UN commander to make Makarios agree to a ceasefire to enable the Turkish Cypriot women and children (and incidentally his own men) to be evacuated. When they did attack, their targets were the Greek Cypriot artillery positions, not "neighbouring villages".

This example is typical of the distorted account of events which this book contains. It should be approached with more caution than C. M. Woodhouse's glowing review would suggest.

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### Freud and Modernism

Sir, – To justify his original structures B. Burgoyne (Letters, August 3) now argues that in expressing his approval of Pfister's book on Expressionism Freud "appears to have failed to notice" the fundamental difference of their views. Admittedly the antecedents of the Nazi slogan *entartete Kunst* (degenerate or decadent art) cannot be unravelled in a letter, but it clearly rests on a crude perversion of the all-too-widespread Romantic belief in a link (both positive and negative) between artistic creativity and certain pathological conditions, a belief which not only captivated Nietzsche, Thomas Mann and a good many artists, but also Pfister and Sigmund Freud.

E. H. GOMBRIICH

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### Commemorating American Poets

Sir, – Edward Mendelson's impressionistic and breezy account of the May 7 ceremony establishing an American Poets' Corner in the Cathedral of St John the Divine (Commentary, June 29) fudges the facts and makes the unwarranted as well as ungenerous inference that the whole affair was a public relations stunt.

The ceremony was conducted with dignity and for no other reason than to honour American men and women of letters. Those who worked hard and unselfishly to make the occasion memorable deserve something better than a supercilious dismissal.

DANIEL AARON  
ANTHONY HECHT  
RICHARD WILBUR  
New York

### 'Dr Faustus'

Sir, – I was interested in Simon Berry's review (Commentary, July 27) of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, because I have never seen it suggested before that the character called Bruno is intended for Giordano Bruno. It does not seem to me very likely. The character is described as a Saxon and is said to have been chosen as Pope by the Emperor Charles V. He is not described as a philosopher or heretic. The only point of resemblance, apart from the name, is his sentence of burning, but that can only be coinci-

dence because Marlowe died in 1593 and Giordano was burnt in 1600.

P. O. SUAREZ

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### John Clare

Sir, – John Lucas is mistaken in stating (July 27) that John Clare's "The Flirting" is not included in Geoffrey Grigson's *Muses Library* selection. There I read it twenty-five years ago, and I tried to translate two of its most magical stanzas in "Avez-vous lu John Clare?", a short essay which appeared in the first number of *Nouveau Commerce* (1963) together with a French version of "Journey to Essex". This was before the publication of *Poèmes et Proses de la Folie de John Clare* (Paris, 1969).

PIERRE LEVRS  
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### War Poetry

Sir, – Keith Bosley, in his review of *From Oasis into Italy* (July 6), appears to believe that, like the forthcoming *Oxford Book of War Poetry*, an anthology of war verse should cover writings from Homer to the present time, from many countries and wars and not necessarily written by those who took part.

The point of the Oasis series is to publish poetry and prose written during the Second World War by those serving in it and written at the time and place, so giving the material an immediacy and authenticity, in this case from the Mediterranean theatres of war. We have spent the years collecting MSS from many unknowns who served and wrote in that war. We have worked through the established poets on that war, the poets your reviewer labels "professionals". At the end, we hope, we have achieved what General Sir John Hackett calls in his foreword to our book "an environmental archive of the times without which the history cannot be fully understood". Sir John wrote this anticipating that there might be a reviewer who would misinterpret our aims, as indeed Bosley has.

Bosley's contention is that because of our insistence on all material being of the time and place, all the poems in the collection are by what he calls "amateurs". He maintains that this is a "crucial error". But the established poets as well as those moved to write for the first time all wrote under the same conditions. They responded to the impact of events. This is what gives war poetry its quality and held far poets in both World Wars. Where else could Sassoon have reacted so angrily to the horror of the trenches? In a college cloister? True, a Keith Douglas revised and revised but the first draft came from the action. A reviewer is entitled to his point of view but it is absurd to condemn a poet of the calibre of John Jarman for the crime of modelling himself on Wilfred Owen – which incidentally he did not; we appreciate Jarman because we know the scene he wrote of.

Bosley berates us for having an editorial team of four plus two advisers, Field Marshal Lord Corder and General Sir John Hackett. He calls it "top heavy". Has he any experience of gathering MSS from myriad sources, then the process of selection and decision in order to achieve a balance, both representative of the sources and sufficiently literary, which ensures that all that is worth while goes into our limited space?

Three years of work went into the preparation of *From Oasis into Italy*. For the *Oasis Anthology of Second World War Poetry*, which we are preparing for publication by Dent in their Everyman series next year, we have had to work through 7,000 poems, many of them also from unknowns, as well as over 100 books. This demands a team: one cannot leave selection to one person's judgment.

Bosley makes a snide reference to our team of editors and advisers as "old soldiers". Maybe it is the vogue to recruit those with no first-hand experience of the scene to judge those who took part but it is difficult to believe in a substitute for personal experience.

VICTOR SELWYN  
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*Philadelphia: A 300 year history* by R. F. Welch, reviewed in our issue of June 29, is available in the UK at £15.50.

### Editing 'Ulysses'

Sir, – Jack Elam's engaging letter (July 27) helps me sharpen an issue implicit in my review of the Gable *Ulysses*. I'm sure he's right about the price of Fry's chocolate in 1904; as I trust my wording indicated, I'd suspected as much. Two shillings, after all, bought Bloom a dinner. An editor who let the typist's penny stand would be faithful to one criterion Joyce prized, the fit between his text and a non-textual world.

But *Ulysses*, like most books, though more than most books, plays a game of internal consistency also. So since Joyce has shown Bloom spending his final coppers ("literally the last of the Mohicans"), the figure given for his cash at the end of the day must not require pennies.

Joyce may or may not have noticed the typist's alteration of 1s to 1d. He did notice sums going wrong, and emended those. In so doing he created a discrepancy between "0-17-5", which he wrote in a list of errata, and "the last of the Mohicans", which he may have forgotten. A less hurried Joyce would have had to choose one or the other, or (probably) contrive other alterations an editor is not authorized to envisage.

In restoring the earlier readings, 1s for the sweet and 0-16-6 for the balance, Professor Gable was faithful to the textual editor's criterion of keeping the book consistent with itself while intruding minimally. Also he said in a note what he'd done and why. True, there is another world, not defined by texts though frequently coincident with them, a world in which we can sometimes ascertain the price of chocolate. But let editors start routinely invoking that world and Shakespeare's Bohemia will lose its sea-coast, his Rome its chiming clock, his Ulysses all knowledge of Aristotle, his Shylock every objectionable trait, his Cleopatra her mastery of English, and his plays their picturesque integrity.

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### 'Sir John Did His Duty'

Sir, – Don Markwell's review in your columns of my book *Sir John Did His Duty* (April 20) excited a letter from the Commonwealth Attorney-General (June 22) expressing his disapproval of that review and of the conclusions of the book. There has now been a response by Don Markwell (Letters, June 29) answering, as I think, adequately the criticism the Attorney-General makes.

However, as the events of 1975 in Australia have engaged the attention of your readers, I should like to add a brief comment.

Under the Australian Federal Constitution, an appropriation for annual supply can only be made by an Act of Parliament (section 81). The concurrence of the Senate is indispensable to the passage of such an Act (sections 1, 7 and 53), except in the case of a joint sitting (section 57). In 1975 the Senate (for the first time in its history) was unwilling to concur in the grant of Supply unless a general election were first called. The Senate's attitude, first formally manifested on October 16, was repeated last on November 5. The ministry was unwilling to call an election. Consequently, Supply was not granted by the Parliament. The Prime Minister notwithstanding refused to advise a dissolution or to resign: he proposed to continue in government without Supply. The Governor-General, forming the view that the ministry was unable to secure Supply, dismissed the ministry, appointed a caretaker ministry which could obtain Supply and would advise a dissolution of the Parliament.

The Attorney-General says this action by the Governor-General was a gross abuse of power. On the contrary, to the perceptive his action was an example of parliamentary democracy in operation. The two Chambers of the Parliament were deadlocked, not only with respect to Supply but with respect to a number of other bills. The evident end-purpose of the action was an example of parliamentary democracy in operation. The two Chambers of the electorate to break the deadlock.

The caretaker ministry obtained Supply on the same day that it was appointed. It immediately advised a dissolution of both Chambers of the Parliament, for which the prevailing

John Doe



## COMMENTARY

## A life for the star

Pia Pera

CHARLES WOOD  
Red Star  
The Pit, Barbican

Michail Gelovani, the Georgian actor, became famous playing the role of Stalin in such epic films as *The Oath* and *The Fall of Berlin*. His name is brought to mind by this story of Nikolay, a demobilized soldier and actor (Richard Griffiths) whose knack for impersonating the Great Leader and Teacher lands him first in a labour camp and then in the beautiful heavens of Soviet cinematic stardom. "Playing at Tsar" has traditionally been the carnivalesque counterpart of Russian despotism: Ivan the Terrible indulged in the whim of nominating as Tsar the Tatar Khan Simeon Bekbulatovich; Peter the Great enjoyed humbling himself as the slave of the boyar F. Romodanovskii, whom he would greet for the occasion as "Prince and Caesar". Of course this game was safe as long as the tables were not turned from the wrong side: Pugachev was such a case. Power as a mask, a fiction imposed by force—a favourite theme of Charles Wood's—is a much rehearsed subject.

Nikolay's first big chance as an actor in the Theatre of the Glorious Soviet Agricultural Workers in Moscow is to be Julius Caesar—in a play which also went well in the Chicago of *Anurov*. The arbitrary and ideologically motivated decision to obliterate the first two acts, so as to begin with the assassination, recalls the ordinary practice of some Soviet historiography: Stalin and Zhdanov gave directives against the study of populist terrorism (revolutionary inspiration was not encouraged); the circumstances of Bukharin's assassination were kept obscure and exploited so that Stalin's accomplices should "be called purgers, not murderers" (*Julius Caesar*, II, 1).

Rome as a metaphor of imperial power had become a frequently challenged Russian monopoly since at the end of the fifteenth century the monk Philoteus decreed in Pskov: "Two Romes have fallen, a Third stands, a fourth there shall not be." In Soviet Rome Nikolay is dismissed from his part because he rushes on to the stage holding his string bag of oranges, so precious that they could be stolen. In the heyday of Socialist Realism, when theatres were putting on plays to prove that all conflicts were in "America", this accidental infiltration of daily life looks like a tendentious deformation of bright Soviet reality.

## Letters

circumstances were ripe, the dissolution was proclaimed on the same day. The election was set for December 13, the last day on which, due to the logistics of the process, an election could be held in that year. The election was held. The electorate broke the deadlock. The former ministry was defeated at the polls and the caretaker ministry overwhelmingly supported.

Just why the dismissal of a ministry unable to obtain Supply was an abuse of power is not explained. There is no doubt that the Senate had constitutional power to fail to concur in the grant of Supply. Without Supply, a government must fall by resignation or by dismissal if parliamentary democracy is to be maintained. Anyone familiar with the record of the pre-Federation constitutional conventions will know that the Senate was intended to have the power to bring down a government. There were then, and there are now, sound Federal reasons for the Senate being able to do so. Don Markwell quotes the well-known passage from Sir Harrison Moore's authoritative work which pointed out this clear intention.

But the Attorney-General says: (1) that in Australia only the House of Representatives can bring down a government; (2) that there is no convention in Australia that a prime minister who cannot secure Supply because of the unwillingness of the Senate to grant it should resign. But the necessity for a prime minister unable to obtain Supply to resign or advise dissolution is of the very essence of parliamentary democracy, irrespective of whether the inability to obtain Supply derives from action or inaction of either Chamber of the Parlia-

The fateful oranges reveal Nikolay's vocation as Holy Fool. His next blunder is to sleep-walk into the impersonation of the Great Leader and Teacher. Nikolay is a good Soviet soldier, a cautious citizen, a vociferous antisocialist: *homo sovieticus* in all respects. His acts of insubordination have all the compulsiveness of Freudian slips. Yet his errors make him step out of a cloak of lies and embark on a train journey towards a truer life, found in the world of camp convicts. The criminals, as he discovers, are the only ones not to lead the double life customary for ordinary citizens: which epitomizes Stalin's Russia, the world-turned-upside-down of a proletarian farce.

After murdering his fiancée Doosia (Lesley Duff), outraged that her assignment in the construction of socialism is to frame foreigners in her bed, Nikolay takes up the life of a Russian wanderer. He experiences real brotherhood with his fellow inmate Lubzin (David Schofield), with whom he shares his last orange. Still carrying the unshakeable weight of his impersonation, at about the same location where Schweik met Hitler, Nikolay stumbles into Stalin, who gives instructions that he should take his place in his coffin: although Nikolay does not look like Stalin, Stalin does look like him.

This chaotic vaudeville has a merit, namely to convey a peculiar dimension of Soviet life. Material shortages are the unplanned results of an otherwise planned economy; in a situation of scarcity the rare commodities remain such only for the happy few. To the majority they are turned into surreal signs pointing to a void which is invaded by interpretation. Signs are what Soviet shop-windows exhibit.

The contemporary Russian intelligentsia likes to claim familiarity with structural semantics. In *Red Star* the pet themes of fashionable semiotic jargon proliferate by association: holy fools, playing at Tsar, the farcical aspect of power and the theatricalization of life imposed since Peter the Great turned the Russian *mnin* into a stage. These scattered themes as well as an abundance of comic-strip material are piled up by Wood but never blended, so that style is the one element conspicuously missing from his play. All along, it is Nikolay the soldier whom we see blundering from episode to episode, across the picturesque fragments of a broken ethnic kaleidoscope. That this 1984 joke should be seen on the stage of The Pit is perhaps one more piece of this surrealist puzzle.

The Constitution (section 61) vests the extensive power of the Commonwealth in the Governor to be exercised by the Governor-General. He is to have executive councillors of his own choice "to advise" him "on the government of the Commonwealth" (section 62). It is said that these provisions do no more than grant a discretionary power; and, so I understand, that therefore the Governor-General had no obligation to act as he did. But, first, to say that the power is discretionary is not necessarily to deny that there may be an obligation to exercise the power, albeit in such manner as the donee sees fit. Second, and more significantly, the executive power vested by section 61 is the power to govern. By way of emphasis, the section says that the power "extends to the maintenance of the Constitution and the enforcement of the laws of the Commonwealth".

Is there no obligation to govern? Or to maintain the Constitution which erects a parliamentary democracy? Or to enforce the laws of the land? Of course there must be, and the obligation to exercise the power is the substance of the vesting of the power. Performance of the obligation to maintain the Constitution required the action taken by the Governor-General on November 11, 1975.

It was the persistence of erroneous views recently reiterated by the Attorney-General which prompted me to write, in a manner suitable for laymen, my book *Sir John Did His Duty*.

Before concluding, may I advert to a matter which does not directly relate to the propriety of the Governor-General's action but rather

## Odious endeavours

Roger Warren

WILLIAM CONGREVE  
The Way of the World  
Chichester Festival Theatre

When William Gaskill directed *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem* for the National Theatre in the 1960s, he discarded the empty decorative, puppet-like posturing that passed—and sometimes still passes—for Restoration "style", in favour of the direct storytelling and exploration of human motives that characterize all his productions. He now applies this approach to *The Way of the World* at Chichester. While the production is set insistently in period, there is nothing affected about it.

Gaskill maintains a strong narrative line through the convoluted plot, greatly assisted by Hayden Griffin's austere handsome and extremely functional set. Chichester's open stage is enclosed with polished wooden walls and a raked parquet floor; the back walls reverse to reveal vistas of St James's Park, glimpsed through a large central archway; concealed exits in the side walls facilitate the "backstairs" intrigues. This clean, uncluttered design allows a complicated action to flow unimpeded, and also provides a framework within which it is natural for people simply to stand and converse.

Gaskill typically mines the text for the human complexities and contradictions which may be suggested by Congreve's balanced, often antithetical style; and here he has the advantage of an exceptionally strong female cast. The marvellously bleak awareness of the fragility of human relationships which Mrs Marwood and Mrs Fainall express in their opening conversation is strikingly brought out by Sara Kestelman's icily scheming Mrs Marwood and still more by Sheila Allen's Mrs Fainall, who invests her remark that men "meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as fly from us" with the melancholy of Pope's "Still round and round the ghosts of beauty glide, / And haunt the places where their honour died". Sheila Allen brings to Mrs Fainall the combination of tough, unsentimental honesty and warm generosity that distinguishes all her work. Not for the first time, Mrs Fainall emerges as the most sympathetic character in the play, especially when she un-

selfishly furthers the marriage of her ex-lover Mirabell to Millamant.

Maggie Smith's glitteringly varied Millamant is a very different kind of performance. She uses her familiar repertoire of verbal reflections to write every possible laugh during one speech so that she can literally "dwindle" into wit. Like Judi Dench's Millamant in John Barton's 1978 RSC production she lingers sensuously over her reference to Mirabell's "odious"—that is, sexual—"endeavours"; and as in that production, there is a distinct suggestion that Mirabell and Millamant are not quite so evenly matched as their symmetrically balanced speeches in the proposal scene suggest.

Maggie Smith certainly lives up to the famous lines with which Mirabell heralds her arrival: "Here she comes, I faith, full sail, with her fan spread and her streamers out", but Michael Jayston's matter-of-fact Mirabell delivers the speech without any relish. When, immediately afterwards, she mocks his "admirable wise face" and he responds by criticizing "the variety of [her] disposition", there is a strong sense that they might in fact not "agree"—so that much more seems to depend upon the conditions and provisos of the proposal scene than usual. Though Millamant is again the dominating partner here, both of them make much of the scene's erotic undertow, especially such double-entendres as "I'll get up in a moment as early as I please."

That scene is the high point of the evening. Thereafter the production falters somewhat, largely because of the interpretation of Lady Wishfort as a pale, insecure, rather sad woman instead of the customary vulgar baroness. There is some textual support for this in the line like "I'm as pale as a sheet, I look like Mrs Quallsick, the curate's wife, that's always bleeding", and it brings some rewards, as in her mock-gentle disclaiming of any "iteration of nuptials" in the Sir Rowland scene, which emerges as a minor-key parody of the Mirabell/Millamant wooing. But Joan Plowright's performance in general lacks size and projection. So, even more seriously, does Ian Flegg's mumbling, virtually inaudible Fainall: his vicious attack on his wife at the end goes for nothing, particularly regrettable when Mrs Fainall is so strongly played. John Moffat's ministerly Witwood, on the other hand, like Maggie Smith's Millamant, makes every word tell, and their obvious pleasure in the language naturally increases our own.

In maintaining the attack upon me for having given the Governor-General correct advice, the Attorney-General challenges my personal opinion that the question on which I advised was not "justiciable", i.e. not a matter in which the courts could exercise jurisdiction. In support of his challenge, he refers to a High Court decision, *FAI Insurance Ltd v Winneke and others* (41 ALR 1). This letter is not the appropriate vehicle to fully discuss this decision. But, truly, it says nothing, either in decision or in *obiter dicta*, which supports the justiciability of the matter on which I advised. Briefly, in that case, a State statute gave to the State Governor in Council the power by Order to renew a licence to conduct insurance business. A majority of the High Court found itself able to construe the statute as requiring the Governor in Council to afford an applicant "natural justice" when deciding to make an Order refusing a renewal of such a licence. The majority was also able to hold that in making such a decision the Governor in Council was performing a merely routine administrative function which involved no question of government policy, being confined to the sole question of the suitability of the applicant to hold the licence. The Court on this footing found itself able to declare the Order in Council refusing renewal void for want of "natural justice". This case and the statute it involved is far removed from and says nothing about the question of the Court's power to control the constitutional power of the Governor-General to appoint, or to dismiss, the ministry.

The dismissal of the incumbent ministry in

## Bibliographical Practice

Sir, — Although I cannot agree with B. O. Bloomfield (Letters, July 13) that first book citations appearing in anthologies, where the item has previously appeared in a periodical, should be excluded from Section B of author bibliographies, I can certainly understand his reluctance to include short quotations in Section B's bookellers' and auction catalogues to Section C. However, in my Lowry Bibliography, they are included there for the simple reason that there are so few of them that it seems a waste of space to create a separate section for them. J. HOWARD WOOLMER, Revere, Pennsylvania.

Blasphemy, from which the cover illustration for July 6 issue was taken, is not, as stated in the caption, a reprint but a tribute to Winston Churchill and the Vorticists; it includes a number of

## The art of losing

Richard Combs

Broadway Danny Rosa  
Various cinemas

Since Woody Allen hit his stride as a stylist—a classic matter of reducing and simplifying his films into concise, block-and-white essays with a funny-sad tale to tell, great technical virtuosity being passed off as indifference—it has become more and more obvious that he has only one film to make. This needn't be a complaint, given that the one-subject artist is both recognized and esteemed. The trouble is that Allen's one film keeps revealing a troubling schizophrenia, which rather belies the appearance of classic unity. In fact, it is only since his films stopped being runaway series of gags and took on such a severe, ascetic look that the problem has emerged.

This has to do with Allen's presence as a performer, the lead character who is the most unvarying element from film to film, the little guy with an inferiority complex as large and well defined as the Manhattan skyline, who finally discovers that his sense of inadequacy is not a barrier to true love and/or successful sex. The sentimentality of this becomes a problem only because there is a double sentimentality involved, a double gratification of the hero, one within the film (he gets the girl), and one, as it were, without (the fact that it is a "Woody Allen film" and his is the character with the best, or the only, jokes). Alongside the romantic happy ending, there is a second, implicit one: that someone so articulate and funny about being a loser can't actually be a loser. Allen has managed to play a little man who is somehow always larger than the film. *Zelig*, his last film, almost escaped this perverse vanity, with a hero so inadequate that he kept disappearing as a character, while the film itself disappeared into mock-documentary graininess. But in the end, even this intriguing, half-of-mirrors equation allowed the hero to walk off into the sunset with a romance and a character snatched out of nothing.

On the surface, there is no reason why *Broadway Danny Rosa* should be any different. Allen is again the title character, a small-time theatrical agent and an unstoppable fount of wisecracks and self-deprecating humour that reduce other characters to sounding-boards and the heroine, inevitably, to an ego-booster. The problem might have been compounded by the fact that the film's background—the world of hustling agents and stand-up comics, the "bortsch belt" of the Catskill Mountain resorts where old jokes are retailed to even more ancient audiences—is actually Allen's own. And the usual city-wide invocation of Manhattan as a setting has here shrunk to a few theatrical locales, primarily the Carnegie Deli, where, at the beginning of the film, a group of comedians are swapping their favourite stories about the notorious wash-out Danny Rosa.

Danny is so notorious because the acts he chooses to promote—to which, indeed, he selflessly devotes his life—are themselves scarcely even bottom of the barrel: balloon

folders, one-legged tap-dancers, one-armed jugglers, etc. His luck begins to change when one out-of-date singer, Lou Canova (Nick Apollo Forte), begins to be fashionable again in the nostalgia boom. But Danny's luck changes back when he becomes involved with Lou's girl-friend, Tina Vitale (Mia Farrow), her dead husband's extended Italian-American (Mafia) family, and the problem of getting her on time to a vital concert that Lou is giving. Danny and Tina's sparring relationship begins to drift towards a familiar groove when they first manage to slip away for a quiet walk in the woods (more than familiar, this is Allen's "signature" scene).

He confesses his deep inadequacy, the unlikelihood of someone as attractive as her becoming involved with someone like him, and she consoles him that she's less attracted to strong, confident men than to intellectuals. But it's precisely here that *Broadway Danny Rosa* begins to turn in a novel direction, since it's apparent that, despite having the usual Allen qualification of a guilt-ridden Jewish loquaciousness, Danny is no intellectual. And from this it follows that he doesn't have the same hold "outside" the film—over the other characters and over the audience—as Allen's previous heroes. This neurotically self-destructing go-getter is not automatically redeemed by his creator's comic genius, and so his ultimate redemption through his love for Tina has a genuine pathos that makes this Allen's most moving, and possibly his best, film.

There are other repercussions—and perhaps explanations—of this. One is that the film is told in reported speech, that Danny and Tina's story is traded across the deli table by a group of characters who don't themselves figure in the story. They have the controlling narrative "voice"—rather than the Allen character, as in *Manhattan*—and the film's own narrative style follows this conversational cue, with digressions, interjections and backtracks which further help to keep Danny/Allen in place. Another is that Danny's inadequacy is made psychologically interesting rather than being merely a comic given.

The fact that he only promotes hopeless acts, the fact that any performer who becomes the least bit successful through his energetic offices immediately leaves him for another agent, add up to the symptoms of a Zelig case—someone so eager to please other people that he totally effaces himself—which Zelig didn't touch on. Even guilt, that automatic Jewish inheritance which Allen has only had to mention before to get an automatic response, is here rendered through a substantial example. Threatened at one point by Tina's impatient relatives, who want the name of her current fancy man, Danny protests Lou by coming up with Barney Dunn, a stuttering ventriloquist so bad that even Danny won't have him as a client, and who he believes is safely working on a cruise ship. But he isn't; he gets badly beaten; a stricken Danny offers to pay his hospital bills, and Barney joins Danny's clientele. There's guilt—and one reason why *Broadway Danny Rosa* is Woody Allen's best bid yet for comic greatness.

## COMMENTARY



A print by Wenceslaus Hollar, 1656, of William Ramsey's chapter-house and cloisters of 1336 in Old St Paul's Cathedral; reproduced from *The Building of London from the Conquest to the Great Fire* by John Schofield (190pp. British Museum Publications with the Museum of London. £12.95, 07141 8053 X).

## Sale of illuminated miniatures

Sarah Bradford

The illuminated miniatures from the collection of the late Lord Clark of Saltwood, sold at Sotheby's on July 3, were interesting not only for their quality but also for their provenance, most of them having been acquired by Clark in 1930 from a descendant of the great Scottish connoisseur of medieval art, James Dennistoun (1803-55). Dennistoun was the first to identify Piero della Francesca and, in pursuit of his project for a history of medieval art, spent twelve years travelling through Italy and Germany amassing material. By the time he returned to Edinburgh in 1847 his collection included a Book of Hours signed by Perugino and the miniatures, several of which he had purchased from the Duomo in Florence.

Among the items in the Clark collection were two full-page Early Gothic miniatures from a major German manuscript illuminated in Würzburg c1240, which were acquired by H.P. Kraus for the Getty Museum for £176,000

—the highest price so far paid for single leaves—and a fine full-page miniature from a Greek Gospel illuminated in Constantinople, c1400, which sold for £41,800 to Tissot. Five lots came from a series of thirty-nine cuttings purchased by Dennistoun in Lucca in 1838 which he regarded as among the finest in his collection. The illuminations, all of the same period and provenance, were executed in Tuscany by various artists, as yet unidentified, and once belonged to the Carthusian abbey of Santo Spirito at Lucca. The Abbey's library was, according to Dennistoun, looted by the French: on the invasion of Italy by the revolutionary armies of France, these beautiful books were plundered, and fell into the hands of some bores, who proceeded to cut up the broad parchment leaves wherewith to cover their flasks of oil. Fortunately someone rather less barbarous rescued these initials by crudely cutting them out, without the slightest regard to the elegant borders, which are cruelly mangled. These survivors were bought by Breslau for £14,140, by Brigstott for £22,000, by the New York dealer, Ed Rubin, for £7,150 and by Leggat for £5,500.

## AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Fleur Adcock's *Selected Poems* were published last year.

J. E. J. Altham is a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

Vernon Bogdanor's books include *Much-Party Politics* and *The Constitution*, 1983.

Iain Boyd Whyte's translation of the "Glasnevin Kette" letters will be published next year.

Graham Bradshaw is a lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews.

David Bromwich teaches in the English Department at Princeton University.

J. W. Burrow's *A Liberal Descent: Victorian historians and the English past* was published in 1981.

Richard Combs is the editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

James Deakin is the author of *Straight Stuff: The reporters, the White House and the truth*, 1984.

John Fairleigh is senior lecturer in Social Studies at Queen's University, Belfast.

Denton Fox is a Professor of English at the University of Toronto.

Sean French is deputy literary editor of *The Sunday Times*.

John Grayson's *Nabokov Translated: A comparison of Nabokov's Russian and English prose* was published in 1977.

Paul Hamilton is the author of *Coleridge's Poetics*, 1983.

Dominic Hibberd is a lecturer in English at the University of Keele.

Ronald Hingley's *Pasternak: A biography* was published in 1983.

George Holmes's most recent book is *Dante*, 1980.

J. P. Kenyon is Professor of Modern History at the University of St Andrews.

Eric Korn is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

Walter Laqueur is the author of *Terrorism*, 1978.

Michael Mallett is the author, together with J. R. Hale, of *The Military Organization of a Renaissance State: Venice 1400-1617*, which will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

Naomi Miller is editor of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*.

David Nokes is a lecturer in English at King's College, London.

Pia Pera is working on a study of Russian Old Believers.

Philip Peters is a student of East European affairs.

C. R. Pike is a lecturer in Russian at the University of Keele.

S. S. Prawer's Blithem Memorial Lecture, *Coastmoor and Englishmen: A study of verbal caricature*, was published earlier this year.

Lord Quilton is President of Trinity College, Oxford.

Peter Redgrove's collection of poems, *The Working of Water*, will be published later this year.

Keith Robbins's *The Eclipse of a Great Power: Modern Britain 1870-1975* was published last year.

Colin Seymour-Ure is Professor of Government at the University of Kent.

Clayton Sigal is Professor of Journalism at the University of Southern California.

Paul Smith is Professor of Modern History at the University of Southampton.

E. S. Turner is completing an ABC of Nostalgia.

Roger Warren's *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Text and performance* was published in 1983.

Nigel Wheale teaches at Cambridge College of Arts and Technology.

C. M. Woodhouse's autobiography, *Something Ventured*, was published in 1982.

John Coates



## Doing time in Siberia

Ronald Hingley

JOSEPH FRANK  
Dostoevsky: The years of ordeal 1850-1859  
320pp. Robson. £14.95.  
0860512428

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY  
The Village of Stepanchikovo  
Translated with an introduction by Ignat Avsey  
255pp. Angel Books. £8.95 (paperback).  
£4.95.  
0946162069

Joseph Frank here continues his examination of Dostoevsky's writings, life and background, this being the second volume to appear in a projected series of five. The preceding instalment (reviewed in the TLS, September 30, 1977) took the great Russian novelist from the cradle to his arrest for political conspiracy in 1849. Now this new volume carries the story through its hero's decade in Siberia, where he spent four years as a convict before serving on as a conscript soldier and officer.

Professor Frank's wide erudition and thorough knowledge of his sources have already been acclaimed by reviewers. If only his judgment were on a comparable level, this monumental study might indeed merit the word "definitive", which is floated in the blurb. For myself, I still retain certain reservations.

Here, as previously, the young Dostoevsky is misleadingly represented as a committed "social idealist", and as an implacable opponent of the Institution of serfdom which so disfigured the Russia of his day. His hatred of serfdom was, it is asserted, "rooted in his sense of guilt over the murder of his father by the peasants on the Dostoevsky estate". This claim is, alas, not borne out by the evidence, no matter how many reference notes may be appended.

It cannot be denied that the young Dostoevsky was prone to burn with compassion for "so-called individual, down-trodden" peasants "as chance to appear before his eyes". Nor can it be contested that he was usually ready to bestow his last kopek on any such unfortunate - while, of course, considerably relishing the strong emotion generated in him by so poignant a confrontation. But it is a far cry from this to any generalized social conscience. Furthermore, Dostoevsky's youthful "experiences" were too harrowing to permit him the luxury of becoming (as he practically becomes here) a sort of East Coast Liberal *avant la lettre*. No amount of special pleading can turn him into that.

There is a similar imbalance in Frank's

account of the conversion which Dostoevsky supposedly experienced in Siberia. Now, it is perfectly clear that the young and more-or-less left-wing radical of the 1840s did eventually turn into the diehard traditionalist of the 1870s. But this was a gradual process. It can, for example, be logged from Dostoevsky's changing views on the peasant as expressed in successive stages: in his correspondence of 1854 (largely hostile to the peasantry); in *House of the Dead* of 1861 (an intermediate stage); and in *Diary of a Writer* of the 1870s (frantic muzhikolatry). Frank says that "It is one of the anomalies of *House of the Dead* that Dostoevsky does not include an account of his conversion experiences in its pages. Why he failed to do so is difficult to say." The explanation is simple: no such sudden conversion did in fact take place.

The biographer is justified in using *House of the Dead* - despite its fictional disguise - as evidence of Dostoevsky's own thinking. But he fails to allow for the book's date. Certainly it does reflect its author's state of mind at the time when it was written, but as evidence of his attitude during his imprisonment up to ten

years earlier it should have been treated more critically. There is excellent material here on Dostoevsky's epilepsy, on his courtship of his spectacularly ineligible first wife, as also on his two comic novels written in Siberia. And in general the book will much improve the availability of information on its subject. It will, however, be of most benefit to those (and few they are) who already know the sources thoroughly, and who also know that Dostoevsky was more of an imp and endearing maniac than the solemn young man depicted in these pages.

This brings us to the central paradox of Frank's study. His cool, lucid, analytical approach, his quiet, unimpassioned marshalling of his material - all this is most admirable. Yet such things were anything but acceptable to Dostoevsky himself. Did he not write novel after novel and article after article denouncing man's excessive reliance on rationality, and decrying it as the fount of evil? What is to be expected in the succeeding volumes of this study as Dostoevsky's eminently reasonable chronicler grapples more and more closely

with Dostoevsky the increasingly militant of reason? It is almost as if this most pre-emptive, by some quirk of fate, from the urbane, highly educated, superbly intelligent sophisticated who (in his creator's presentation) so signally fails to grasp the essence of reality precisely because he possesses those very laudable qualities.

By a happy coincidence *The Village of Stepanchikovo* (the main literary work of Dostoevsky discussed in full by Professor Frank) has recently appeared in a new translation by Ignat Avsey. This magnificent comic novel, previously known in English as *A Friend of the Family*, is the longer and by far the more impressive of the two short novels written in Siberia, and represents Dostoevsky's most important achievement from the period preceding *House of the Dead*. Here is a lively rendering of an unjustly neglected work; it adds an especially welcome item to the series of new translations from Russian already issued by Angel Books.

## Freely speculating

Jane Grayson

JOHN GARRARD (Editor)  
The Russian Novel from Pushkin to Pasternak  
300pp. Yale University Press. £25.  
0300 029357

The alliterative title of this volume is perhaps a little deceptive. The Russian Novel from Pushkin and Pasternak is a long way from being a comprehensive study of the Russian novel. It is a collection of eleven articles by a variety of authors and on a variety of topics, some of them highly specialized, the original inspiration for which was a summer seminar for American college teachers. John Garrard has written a twenty-five page introduction which gives a high-speed résumé of the development of Russian literature from the "dawn of Russian history" to the present day and which aims at the issue of the quiddity of the Russian novel. Although somewhat glib and naive the introduction will undoubtedly interest the general reader, at whom it is presumably aimed. But no sense of profit, surely, could be gained from the chronological appendix of novels. There giants rub shoulders with pygmies, emigrés with "lifers", novels are set alongside short stories, and it is not even absolutely accurate.

Nabokov's *Ocheyaniye* was not published in 1928; it was serialized in 1934 and appeared in book form in 1936. The desire for coherence and continuity is an unquestionable virtue in an editor, but here it might be felt that he has exceeded his brief; more seriously, he has disguised the essentially academic nature of the main body of the book.

The opening section consists of two surveys of Russian literature, both by distinguished Slavic scholars: Donald Fanger suggests that formal freedom is the hallmark of the Russian novel; Edward Wasiolek, in an equally well written short piece, favours the more traditional view that the Russian novel is a vehicle for speculation about the meaning of life. In the next section, the nineteenth century is represented by Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Kathryn Feuer writes sensitively on *Fathers and Sons*, suggesting that we would do well to concentrate less on the conflict between the generations, but, rather on the affection between them. Perhaps, she suggests, Chernyshevsky was right to see this as the most subversive element in the novel.

The twentieth-century section considers Bely, Pilyayak, Fedin, Aleksey Tolstoy, Zamyatin, Platonov and Pasternak. Carol Anshevitz undertakes a long and difficult "Nietzschean" approach to *Peterburg*. George

Gibian is looking for a new angle on Pasternak in 1928; it was serialized in 1934 and appeared in book form in 1936. The desire for coherence and continuity is an unquestionable virtue in an editor, but here it might be felt that he has exceeded his brief; more seriously, he has disguised the essentially academic nature of the main body of the book.

It is, indeed, hard not to agree that something was lost when the age of the dilettante was past and "the professionals" took over.

*Chahers Leon Tolstol, No 1: Anna Karoline* (96pp. Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 2120 0195 1) contains nine essays on aspects of Tolstoy's novel. Contributors include Eflin Etkind ("La pensée et la langue"), Michel Aucouturier ("Le calendrier du roman"), Marie Sémone ("L'engagement du moi") and André Monnier ("Eros et thymos").

names and has an index of supplementary material. The latter presents a good picture of modern developments (not all of them new) in Russian. It demonstrates the adoption of many foreign (largely English) terms, sporting, "cultural" and technological: *akvangel* (aquarium), *gerbitsid* (herbicide), *diskoteka* (discotheque - the place), *klon* (clone), *mikro-protessor*, *nudizm* and *spidvey* (speedway). We also learn that if you suffer from stress, you can take a *trankvilizator*, which may enable you to join your friends at a buffet-supper - the delightful *nygafirsha*.

More interesting and productive are those instances in which Russian has shown greater linguistic independence; either by taking its own formulations, as in *vybyvaniye* (knock-out competition), *vodnolyzhnik* (water-skier), *zakadrovyy golos* (voice-over), *legkovodolaz* (frogman), *muoraboinik* (ghost-writer), *monetprinyimik* (coinboob) and *suspensory* (locktrap); or by allying a foreign prefix to a "Russian" base, as in *videozaply* (video-recording), *diskovecher* (discotheque - the event), *kvazivezd* (quasar), *mikrokarin* (microfiche), *morashlem* (crash-helmet), *perfolenta* (punch tape), *shomp-chary* (time-clock) and *teleshpargalka* (autocue). Throughout, Wheeler has rightly avoided ephemeral terms invented only for the description of foreign contexts.

P. S. Falla's companion volume, *The Oxford English-Russian Dictionary*, fulfils a long-felt

need for the exclusion not only of all obscenities, but of a number of common vulgarities as well. This is a dictionary with some advantages, but a number of limitations. The more substantial achievement is undoubtedly that of Falla's *Oxford English-Russian*, which combines the academic provision of words and terms with imaginative, accurate construction of phraseological and idiomatic equivalents. As such, it constitutes an excellent general dictionary and, together with its companion volume, makes an unprecedented advance in resources for the student of Russian. Nor does Falla leave the field to Wilson in matters of phraseology, slang and colloquialism. His entry for "knock out", for instance, gives good Russian equivalents for "to strike upwards", "to prepare", "to wake", "to enliven", "to make ill", "to make pregnant" and "to warm up for tennis". For the original type of "fence" Wilson gives an explanation *valer kradenogo* (a receiver of stolen goods), whereas Falla has the Russian slang word *kompyuter*. Finally, while Wilson's entry for "computer" contains only the little-used Russian word *kompyuter*, Falla gives several relevant terms. An entertaining item is the combination of a Russian explanation of "computer-dictionary" *podobit suprugov s pomoshch'yu EVM* (with the colloquialism for *elektronnyy svynka* (the electronic match-maker)). In his compounding of innovation and tradition, the

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## Rebuilding the republic

Walter Laqueur

Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
TUDOR-ESCHENBURG  
Band 1: Jahre der Besatzung 1945-1949  
627pp.

HANS-PETER SCHWARZ  
Bände 2 und 3: Die Ära Adenauer  
541pp and 462pp.

Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt/Wiesbaden: Brockhaus.  
3 763 0328 3

WOLFGANG BENZ (Editor)  
Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
Band 1: Politik. 543pp.

3 596 24312 2  
Band 2: Gesellschaft. 364pp.

3 596 24313 0  
Band 3: Kultur. 468pp.

3 596 24314 9  
Frankfurt: Fischer. DM14.80 each.

ROLF STEININGER (Editor)  
Deutsche Geschichte 1945-1961: Darstellung und Dokumente  
Band 1. 3 596 24315 7

Band 2. 3 596 24316 5  
560pp. Frankfurt: Fischer. DM16.80 each.

German politics since the end of the Second World War have shown a great deal of continuity, although accident, too, has played a part. Konrad Adenauer became Chancellor by one vote - his own - and went on to govern for fourteen years. A vote of "constructive non-confidence" in the Social Democrats was moved in 1972 by the Christian Democrats for the first time in the history of the Federal Republic. It was defeated by one vote, and the Social Democrats remained in power for ten more years. German post-war politics have moved in cycles. The Adenauer régime provided stability for a long time but by 1966 the Christian Democrats had run out of steam, of ideas and also of leading personalities. The door was opened first to the grand coalition - from late 1966 to 1969 - and then to thirteen years of Social Democratic government. But even before the end of this period, the Social Democrats showed signs of disunity and tiredness. Helmut Schmidt's difficulties had as much to do with his own party as with the Christian Democrats.

The Social Democrats never had an absolute majority, though their first leader, Kurt Schumacher, thought, as the war ended, that the "party of the poor" was the natural majority party; 65 per cent of the population had lost all or most of their possessions. But after Erhard's currency reform, the economic situation quickly improved and, but for the fact that the Social Democrats managed to break out of the "working class ghetto" (the Godesberg programme), they would have been condemned to perpetual opposition.

But the Christian Democrats also attained an absolute majority only once, in 1957. Like the Social Democrats, they always depended on coalition partners, the Liberals (FDP) who, at one time, gravitated to the centre-right, later to the left, and now collaborate again with the Christian Democrats. But the Liberals have become progressively weaker and, with the emergence of the Greens, the situation has become more complicated.

Today, the issues which divide the two major parties are not really substantial, a fact borne out, for instance, by their quite frequent collaborations at the municipal level. They use the same key words in their programmes and propaganda: "freedom", "solidarity", "justice" (albeit in a different order) - and the social background of their respective supporters is very similar. More, but not many more, workers vote for the Social Democrats than for the Christian Democrats, and salaried employees divide their support between the two parties in roughly equal measure. There are now fewer working-class party officials among the Social Democrats, even in the lower echelons where they have been replaced by younger, more militant, university-educated personnel, usually from middle-class backgrounds. The leadership of the party, too, in the post-Brandt, post-Wilner era, is by and large impeccably middle-class, more so, in fact, than that of the Christian Democrats. Thus, the greater radicalism of Social Democracy in recent years is

not, in the main, the offshoot of working-class militancy. The cultural-ideological dividing line in German politics runs now between different sections of the new middle class and is marked by geographical, religious and age factors. The new class struggle, in other words, is not between bourgeois and proletarians, but between different cultural orientations and life styles.

Until recently, the history of the Federal Republic exhibited a broad consensus on domestic, economic and foreign policies. The Nazis and the extreme right wing which had brought down the Weimar Republic had disappeared, and the Communists, the third largest party in 1932, could not make a comeback after the war, with East Germany acting as a deterrent.

Amid the ruins of 1945, the general feeling was that Germany would never rise again, and following the partition, the pessimism further deepened. The recovery, when it came, seemed almost a miracle and succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of the optimists. Germany may no longer be a world power or a cultural centre, but it is once again a key country in Europe, prosperous, reasonably stable and, above all, democratically governed. Given the lack of toleration in German history, this transformation, too, seems almost miraculous. Most Christian Democrats, however much they may dislike the Social Democrats, no longer think of them all as fanatics and traitors. Most Social Democrats will admit that whatever the weaknesses of the Christian Democrats, they are no longer closet fascists, scheming to abolish democracy at the first opportunity and to establish another dictatorship. Even the Greens, at worst, are seen as friendly, and genuinely well-meaning. If hopelessly confused.

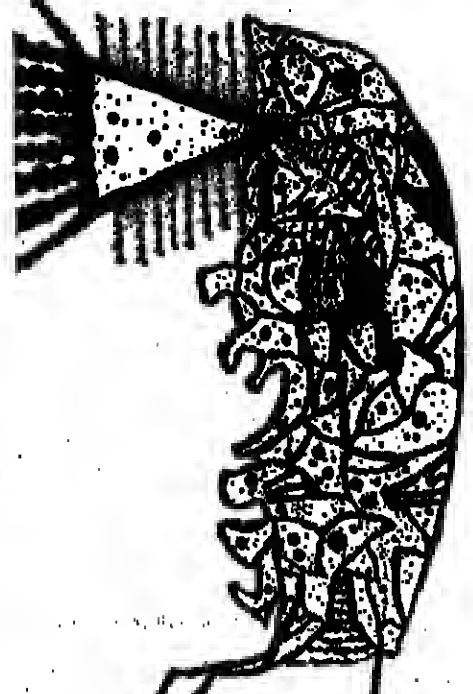
German economic and political achievements have not, it is true, been matched by real self-confidence. Germany is still an unquiet country, its equilibrium is far from perfect, it is prone to exaggeration. It is also true that the country will face major problems in the years ahead. Yet, by and large, its history since 1945 is a success story. It is easy to point in retrospect to sins of omission and commission, some of them inexcusable. But it is necessary to remember the political and economic context - the grinding poverty, the hopelessness, the uprooting of many millions of people, the Soviet thrust into Central Europe - to gain a true understanding of the new Germany. German politics, as well as the German economy, had to be rebuilt from scratch.

The first three volumes to be published of the projected five-volume *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* provide a coherent, well-written, informative and balanced account of recent German history. They show that the emergence of the consensus of the 1960s and 1970s was not as smooth as it appears in retrospect. Most important decisions (and many unimportant ones), from Erhard's economic reforms to Germany's integration in the defence, economy and politics of the West, were bitterly contested for many years; the divisions frequently crossed party lines. The political style of the immediate post-war period was robust. For Schumacher, Adenauer was always the "Chancellor of the Allies", while Adenauer used to call the Social Democrats a "tool of the British government". There was an element of hysteria and over-reaction in party politics.

A striking dichotomy between reality and self-perception emerges from a reading of post-war German history. With all its shortcomings, the present political and social system is infinitely freer and more just than those of Wilhelmian Germany or the Third Reich. Yet it has been degenerated in a way that its predecessors never were. A distastefully German unease, compounded of a disregard of reality and a utopian belief in the perfectibility of institutions, is once more in evidence. Political leaders, parties, the constitutions, the law, the police - everything has been measured and found wanting by substantial sections of the German intelligentsia. Few German critics would find it possible to lead their private lives always in accordance with the same strict standards they apply to the state. This could be connected with the German quest for the absolute, the urge to have greater freedom than

anyone else: political institutions are either perfect or worthless. But the shrillness of the criticism can be misleading. Most Germans, public opinion polls revealed, are as content with their institutions as other Europeans, perhaps even more so.

Both Theodor Eschenburg and Hans Peter Schwarz, in their respective works, have produced excellent accounts of the Adenauer era, especially of its political history. One might have wished for more about economics, social conditions, cultural developments - the *Zeitgeist* in general - but this would obviously have resulted in a series of books twice as long; the economic and cultural history of the Bundesrepublik remains to be written. Given the limitations of space, the abundant illustrations might have been dispensed with, as too might the introductory essays to each volume written by Eberhard Jäckel, Johannes Gross and Theodor Eschenburg, despite their excellence.



Henry Editor's "The Mind Matter Penetration" is on show at the Serpentine Gallery until August 27. In Rome and Adelaide: An exhibition of recent acquisitions for the Arts Council and British Council collections.

The subtitle of the three volumes edited by Wolfgang Benz is somewhat misleading. *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* is a collection of some thirty essays on political, social and cultural institutions in West Germany including, for instance, political parties, the trade unions, the family, the Protestant Church, architecture and television. All of them are useful as an introduction to complex subjects since they contain a great deal of information; chronologies and bibliographies add to their practical value. *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* is a work of reference which inevitably lacks the unity of approach, style and viewpoint of the Eschenburg and Schwarz volumes. The essays on cultural life concentrate on the works of avant-garde artists few of which the average German is likely to have heard of. Critical acclaim is of course important, but it would have been of interest to learn about those films and books with a wider popular appeal. Kahlenberg's essays on films mentions that by the early 1960s the German cinema had entered a "permanent crisis", and that it was followed by the New German Film renaissance for which he has warm praise. Whether these films in fact deserve praise is a question of individual taste. But whatever the critics said, the German public voted with its feet. In the early 1960s, almost 30 per cent of the films shown in German cinemas were still of German origin. At present - disregarding co-productions - the German share is down to 5-6 per cent.

*Deutsche Geschichte 1945-1961*. Rolf Steininger's two volumes of documents on the first decade and a half of Germany's post-war history, are useful and some of his comments shed new light on such issues as the foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia, the most populous of the Länder, or the stages of Germany's partition. But the comments suffer from a weakness frequently found among students of history in that they seem to have been dictated in part by new documents discovered by the author - in this case in the Public Record

Office, and to a lesser extent in Washington. The fact that a document is new does not necessarily make it important; sometimes it does not even make it authentic.

One example should suffice: during 1952, Stalin, in a series of notes, put forward proposals for the re-unification of Germany. In later years, a whole mythology of "the great missed opportunities" developed around these three notes. If Stalin had meant what he said, if he had been willing to sacrifice a Communist East Germany for a free, united (and rearmed) Germany, a great opportunity would indeed have been missed to end the cold war in Europe and to stop the arms race. But the timing of the notes, and many other circumstances beside, suggest that in fact they were no more than a tactical manoeuvre aimed at delaying the integration of West Germany into a Western alliance and at slowing down European unification. The German historian, Hermann Graml, in an authoritative article based on a study of all the available evidence, including American diplomatic documents, and published some three years ago, laid the myth to rest. But Steininger has found a document which seems to contradict Graml's thesis - the report of a conversation in July 1952 between Stalin and Pietro Nenni, the Italian Socialist leader, the text of which was passed on to the Italian embassy in Moscow and ultimately to the British Foreign Office. According to this document, Stalin told Nenni that his willingness to accept German unification had been genuine even though this would have resulted in a country disposed to friendship with the West - although, like Italy, with a strong left-wing opposition.

Stalin may indeed have been willing to make concessions, but certainly not for the reasons given to Nenni. These do not sound at all like Stalin and, generally speaking, do not make sense. No political equilibrium would have ensued. Nor was Stalin in the habit of taking even his closest collaborators into his confidence, let alone foreign Communists, let alone foreigners who were not even Communists. In brief, an interview of this kind proves nothing; the Western allies might have been well advised to take Stalin up to find out how serious he was - not in the hope of achieving a sensational breakthrough, but for the historical record, to forestall the mythology of "missed opportunities". Yet, even if it could have been shown that Stalin was not serious, those who want to believe that the partition of Germany could have been prevented - and that this would have resulted in both a free Germany and a peaceful Europe - would no doubt have found other Soviet notes or speeches or editorials, such as Beria's alleged willingness to make a deal in 1953, or Malenkov's the year after. Missed opportunities do sometimes occur in politics, but not that frequently. The history of Soviet-German relations does not end with the "third note" of 1952. If the Soviet leaders had really been willing to make concessions to prevent the integration of West Germany into the EEC and Nato, they have had countless opportunities to do so in the years since, and there are such opportunities today. But they have not made use of them. Steininger rightly notes in his epilogue that neither the Western powers nor the Soviet Union originally wanted the division of Germany; the Russians were always interested in the whole of Germany. He puts the blame for the partition mainly on Britain and, in particular, the Foreign Office and not without reason, for American policy *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union in Europe was, at least up to 1947, one of unilateral concessions, even appeasement, based on the assumption that such concessions would bring about a lasting agreement. The author blames not only Adenauer but also Schumacher and the Social Democrats whose "excessive anti-Communist and anti-Soviet attitude" undermined the chances for reunification.

What can be done now to overcome the partition, how can the idea of the unity of the German nation be kept alive? It is a serious question but Steininger's answer is cryptic. He says that it is more important that the Germans in the whole of Germany be themselves again ("endlich wieder auf sich selbst besinnen"). This is one of those untranslatable German terms which sound impressive and can mean almost anything - or nothing at all.



# A thoroughly rational residence

Naomi Miller

WILLIAM HOWARD ADAMS

*Jefferson's Monticello*  
288pp, with 100 colour and 250 black-and-white illustrations. New York: Abbeville (available in the UK from Pandemic, 71 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3BN). £35. 0896593940

William Howard Adams, who organized *The Eye of Jefferson* exhibition at the National Gallery in 1976, here introduces Monticello, its surroundings and its contents as an "unparalleled autobiographical legacy". Few texts could match the splendour of Langdon Clay's photographs. Jefferson's original drawings and a wealth of related reproductions; yet Adams succeeds admirably in revealing the wonders of the place, and in exploring the mind of Jefferson. Situating Jefferson's architecture and ideals within the context of the Enlightenment, Adams allows the Virginian's need to master every branch of knowledge and disseminate this learning to the citizenry at large to inform *Jefferson's Monticello*. He makes extensive use of the rich cache of available documents which include Jefferson's writings, letters, journals, memoranda and garden books, as well as visitors' accounts of Monticello, and selected published sources.

Adams traces Jefferson's early passion for building to his birthplace at Shadwell, built by his father, a civil engineer and surveyor, and to a later residence at Tuckahoe, whose plan is noted for its attention to light, its circulation of air and its efficient communication system. Further lessons in the rudiments of architecture took place in the library at Westover, William Byrd II's manor house in Williamsburg, and in the house of his boyhood friend John Page at Rosewell. Mount Airy, built in 1758, supplemented Jefferson's literary introduction to English Palladianism. As a student at William and Mary College, his intellectual interests in science, mathematics and the classics were nurtured by a learned Scots professor of mathematics. Later, his aesthetic education was encouraged by another Scotsman, Dr John Morgan, the founder of the Pennsylvania School of Medicine, who gave the young law student access to his library and his collections of casts from the antique. Less easy to discern is the formation of Jefferson's "eye" for architecture and art, given what Adams calls the "general culture and esthetic poverty" of Williamsburg in 1760.

Recurrent in *Jefferson's Monticello* is the theme of the rational nature of Jefferson's architecture and its total compatibility with his radical politics. As a statesman, he soon realized the symbolic value of architecture in a new society. Thus he recommended that in 1776 the Virginia state capitol be transferred from Williamsburg to Richmond and the State House built there. Jefferson's model was the Maison

Carrée in Nîmes, the Roman temple which he claimed to have gazed at "like a lover at his mistress". Here he hoped that the new classical architecture would announce a new republic based on the ideals of republican Rome as filtered through Lockenn principles of natural law. At the same time all facets of Jefferson's personality – the seeming contradictions of "romantic and realist, poet and pragmatist, democrat and aristocrat" – are also examined. We are made to see a deep-seated ambivalence, especially between his professed desire for the secluded and literary life of the gentleman landowner and the actual conditions of his public and private social life.

The period from 1769 to 1782 was characterized by Jefferson's adherence to Palladianism as distilled by Lord Burlington. Located on an eminence "from which he might contemplate the universe", Monticello constituted a daring solution in site planning, with echoes of Palladio's Villa Rotonda; and, like most of Palladio's villas, Monticello was a working farm. The years from 1796 to 1809 were marked by the reductive geometries of neo-classicism, surely a result of Jefferson's sojourn in Paris from 1784 to 1789 as American minister to France. Here, the first-hand acquaintance with antiquity,

buttressed by contemporary archaeological publications, enabled Jefferson to break with Anglo-Palladian dominated architecture and to interpret Palladianism in accordance with new circumstances. Specifically French features appear in the remodelling. The octagonal dome or "skyroom" (whose purpose remains unknown), constructed "in Delorme's manner", as laid down in his *Nouvelles inventions* of 1561, must be related to the recently completed dome of wood-ribbed glass admired by Jefferson in the Halle aux Blés. The configuration of a dome on a one-storey portico surmounted by a balustrade may owe its genesis to Jefferson's infatuation with the Hôtel de Solm, under construction during his stay in Paris.

In terms of plan, the expanded areas of Monticello's second phase – the octagonal bedrooms and those spatial continuities linking the components of Jefferson's private quarters, comprising bedroom, cabinet and book room – show a new flexibility. The revised plan demonstrates a familiarity with the details of eighteenth-century Parisian domestic architecture in its new arrangement of spaces conforming to their public and private functions rather than merely duplicating the earlier layout. Jefferson's increasingly sophisticated use

of materials, orchestration of details and incorporation of polygonal rooms are visible in a series of delectable plates, such as views of the dining room and "this most honorable seat" the two-room and the greenhouse seen from the cabinet. Here, too, are recorded Jefferson's gudgets – the compass on the corner portico tied to the weather-vane on the roof, the clocks, the mechanical double-doors and the pivoting uncs, the dumb-waiter and serving tables, the folding music-stand and his collection of scientific instruments including the telescope and the polygraph.

Despite an anti-Georgian bias, Jefferson was much drawn to the expression of nature in the English pleasure garden, the *l'anglais*, and its emphasis on shifting perspectives and prospects. His ardour for collecting for hanks and antiquities and all manner of objects, is also present in the garden, which has been likened to a horticultural museum, leading to mind his observations on the emerging profession of gardener, whose skills replaced the laud from generation to generation.

Monticello is Jefferson's memoir, a commentary on his philosophy and ideas. Here the soil of the newly founded republic is the Roman villa as revived in the Renaissance; here, in retirement, his pursuit of happiness involved "the entertaining of guests, and the writing of letters [... and] the management of his farm" amid his collections, plaster casts, copies of famous paintings and, above all, the library, which was the heart of Jefferson's intellectual life. Central to his education. Installed in 1773, it grew to over 6,000 volumes and was sold to the Federal government in 1815, where it became the nucleus of the Library of Congress.

Because of personal extravagance and mismanagement, the estate was dismantled before Jefferson died. In Adams's account, Monticello emerges as less of a paradise and more of an experiment; the idyll is always tempered by the realities. We see it constantly "under construction" rather than as that haven of tranquillity where Jefferson sought peace and a fantasy of the rustic life while enjoying social and the amenities of a luxurious one. He sold the estate in 1831, soon after Laurock's remark on its "utter ruin and desolation". In 1834 Uriah Levy, a naval officer, purchased the estate remained in the hands of his family for ninety years. Photographs of the dining areas c 1890 testify to the radical transformations wrought by the massive and ornate décor of the *belle époque*. In 1897, William Bryn realized the political value inherent in Jefferson's image as the Father of Democracy and proposed government ownership, thereby conferring upon Monticello the status of a national shrine.

*Jefferson's Monticello* is a splendid book, but a few appendices would have made it more valuable as a reference work; specifically a chronology of Jefferson's life and of the building.

Paul Hamilton

CHRISTOPHER NORRIS

*The Deconstructive Turn: Essays in the rhetoric of philosophy*  
210pp. Methuan. Paperback, £4.95. 0416361404

Christopher Norris has written a fascinating and wide-ranging book whose aim is to show how the critical practice of deconstruction can engage with the apparently alien concerns of modern analytic philosophy. By "deconstruction" Norris means an activity which "seeks to reveal the 'logocentric' bias which subjugates writing to speech, the latter conceived as a self-present plenitude of meaning which alone guarantees the authenticity of language". Belief in language's inability to refer to anything other than itself has preoccupied critical discussion under the influence of Jacques Derrida. However, Norris's attempt to suggest a rapport between Anglo-Saxon philosophy and deconstruction traces a genealogy reaching much further back, to the hermeneutical bios of the great idealist philosophers from whom most British philosophers, since Russell's break with McTaggart, have strictly dissociated themselves.

## Good for everyone

J. E. J. Altham

JOHN FINNIS

*Fundamentals of Ethics*  
160pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £14 (paperback, £4.95). 0198246838

MICHAEL SLOTE

*Goods and Virtues*  
148pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £12.50. 0198247079

In a number of publications, and especially in his *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (1980), John Finnis has done much to restate and develop an ethic in the Christian tradition that descends from Aquinas (and ultimately from Aristotle). From much modern moral philosophy one would hardly guess that such a tradition existed, but Finnis has reminded us forcefully of its continuing strength and vitality. In his new book he covers some of the same ground already treated in his earlier work, but its main theme is provided by extended criticisms of moral scepticism and of consequentialist ethics.

These criticisms are disappointing, largely because Finnis fails to identify the real strengths of the positions he opposes. For example, he takes the moral sceptic's two main arguments to be first what J. L. Mackie called the argument from queerness, and secondly the argument from relativity. The former stems from the idea that if there were objective values they would be things of a very strange sort, and the latter argues from the variety of differing moral opinions. These are indeed bad arguments, but neither is the most serious source of scepticism about moral objectivity. Sceptics (or subjectivists as they are better called) are influenced mainly by two other lines of thought. One of these argues that a type of judgment that has the connections with emotions, personal character and will that are characteristic of moral conviction cannot be objective. The other stresses what it sees as epistemological difficulties peculiar to moral objectivity. Finnis cites as a mark of objective truth that under favourable conditions of investigation there will be a tendency for disagreement to diminish. Subjectivists typically claim that if this tendency is to exist, it is not only conditions of investigation that must be favourable; the personal attitudes and characters of the investigators must also be such as to permit convergence. Finnis does little towards showing that these subjectivist claims are false.

A consequentialist believes that one should always act as to produce the best possible state of affairs, even when to do so requires killing or torturing innocent people. He is

Norris's proposed ground for détente is not itself an overt act of deconstruction: he does not seek to expose a shared basis in metaphoricality, a comparable investment in rhetoric or figure which can generate a reading in violation of the thesis which each school tries to prove. He finds kinship in a common theme, not merely in a characteristic of all textuality. The theme which he pursues through some of its ramifications in thinkers as different as Frege, Saussure, Russell, Wittgenstein, Ryle and Austin is that "meaning determines reference". Of course he is quick to admit that there is a world of difference between Frege's or Russell's demands for logical clarification of the idea that there is an unavoidably descriptive quality in any act of naming, and Derrida's celebration of the seeming disappearance of any stable referent under the proliferating and figurative character of the descriptions used to name it. However, Norris rightly points out that Kripke's reversal of such descriptive theories of names – by reaffirming the common-sense intuition that linguistic characterizations of things follow from our ability to designate the things, rather than vice versa – could constitute a corrective to post-structuralist theories of meaning as much as to its intended targets in the Frege–Russell tradition. The sins of both, mortal and venial respectively,

ly, are sins against the same thing.

Norris leaves Kripke's theory virtually unchallenged. He makes token gestures towards a deconstruction of Kripke's vocabulary of "initial baptism", but follows Richard Rorty in seeing the alternatives as being mutually dependent – "No constructors, no deconstructors". Rorty's motto here refers to Kant and Derrida; but – though they would be surprised to find themselves thought of in this way – it is Kripke and his followers who have now emerged as the truly tough-minded realists, the born-again adversaries of deconstruction in contrast to its own undeveloped descriptivist forebears. Rorty's verdict that the issue between these two opponents is finally "undecidable" does not, Norris thinks, leave the field to the deconstructionists but exposes their own "aporia" or need for a physicalist semantics which, by definition, they are incapable of supplying themselves.

The main burden of this argument comes in Norris's penultimate chapter. Up until then in the discussions of Ryle, Wittgenstein, Austin, Kierkegaard, Benjamin and Livingston Lowes, the writing has a familiar feel. The points about a shared thematics are often subtle and interesting; but the emphasis is on a conventional deconstructive reading of metaphorical language that turns it against the thesis it is used to express. The usual binary oppositions arise, and the revelation of textuality monotonously replaces whatever conceptual issues were originally under discussion. As Norris concedes of the dispute in *Glyph* between Derrida and John Searle, there is little "sense of intellectual engagement in the encounter". Norris is perhaps still looking for the substantial opposition he finds for deconstruction in the penultimate chapter. If that chapter had come first, a lot of what followed might not have seemed necessary.

For example, towards the end of his book, Norris happily quotes Saussure at his most pragmatic and least helpful to post-structuralists: "The signifier, though to all appearances freely chosen with respect to the idea that it represents, is fixed, not free, with respect to the linguistic community that uses it." If this were not the case, communication would be impossible, and language could not have the social function it clearly does have. This concession, though, is hard to square with Norris's earlier dismissal of all speech-act theory because of "a textual complexity with themes and figurations which it cannot entirely conceal". At that stage in the book, Austin is a descriptivist who needs ripening into deconstruction.

## The schoolman's hard questions

Did Eve possess a hymen or Adam a prepucce?

Did Eve menstruate in Eden?

In such ideal conditions why did she fail to conceive?

Must man fall to be fruitful?

Was Adam right to leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife as tacitly agreed with God?

Was it wise to want to be wise?

Who did not love God more?

What this world needs is a new theology, more relevant to this moment in time.

Will democracy work in the end?

What is work and when is the end?

Should marriage be abolished in order to bring down the divorce rate?

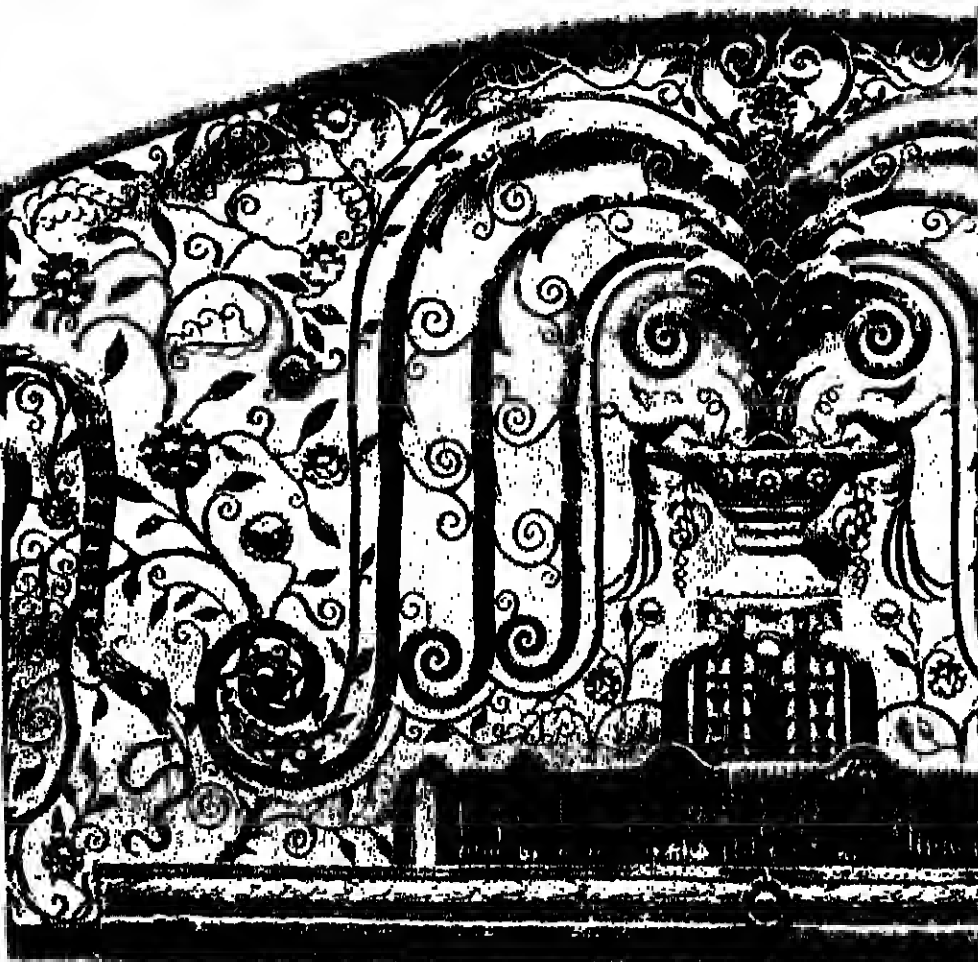
Does colour count, and if so how many blacks make a white and vice versa?

Does murder matter (a) if man is an immortal soul (b) if he dies before long anyway?

Is wisdom wise?

Why doesn't the UN do something?

D. J. ENRIGHT



Detail of a wrought iron lantern in F. Kling Waterwright's house at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, reproduced from *Wrought Iron in Architecture: An illustrated survey* by Gerald K. Geertlings (200pp. Constable. £9.95. 048625357).

## New and noble

Iain Boyd Whyte

WIM DE WIT (Editor)  
*The Amsterdam School: Dutch Expressionist architecture 1915-1930*  
171pp. MIT Press. £22.50. 0262 040743

In 1905 the Dutch architect H. P. Berlage wrote a bleak survey of the contemporary state of the art, but concluded: "On the other hand the comforting vision remains that out of today's desert of ugliness, mutual hate and materialist cynicism a new art will rise up like Phoenix from the ashes." The phoenix, when it came, had two heads. One was the magazine *De Stijl*, which looked to a rationalist future based on abstract, universal laws of form and proportion. The other was the Amsterdam School, centred around *Wendigen*, which placed its faith in the ability of the gifted individual to create ennobling forms appropriate to the new society. While *De Stijl* has been analysed to death, the Amsterdam School has received scant attention. *The Amsterdam School: Dutch Expressionist architecture 1915-1930*, the splendidly illustrated catalogue to an exhibition held

Berlage's hopes for a socially responsible architecture were supported by political developments in Amsterdam during the first twenty years of the century. The increasing strength of the SDAP (Social Democratic Labour Party) on the city council, governmental aid to housing associations, and the direct involvement of the council as a developer promoted an unparalleled boom in public housing, which lasted until 1923. This boom coincided with the brief but dazzling career of Michael De Klerk and with the heyday of the Amsterdam School.

The most striking results of this happy coincidence of political wisdom and artistic ability are the three housing blocks on the Spaandammerplantsoen, built to De Klerk's designs between 1913 and 1921. Rejecting the flat planes and strict rectilinearly of *De Stijl*, De Klerk produced a wilfully organic architecture that delighted in heavily moulded facades, quirky sculptural details and a rich play of colour and materials. Whereas the rationalists were content to let the facade express little more than the repetition of identical units, De Klerk strove to give a specific identity to each dwelling within the block. This inten-

the Hembrugstraat side of the third block, which has no practical function, nor even a door. It merely articulates the facade, terminates the vista of the internal courtyard, and adds a landmark to the cityscape.

Five essays trace the origins and significance of this non-rationalist approach to housing design. On a clear, well-illustrated piece, Wim de Wit points to the common origins of *De Stijl* and the Amsterdam School in the Nieuwe Kunst; the Dutch variant of Art Nouveau. By tracing the divergent development of the two tendencies, he then isolates the theoretical and formal convictions specific to the Amsterdam group. Complementing this account of the wider context, Helen Searing examines De Klerk's stylistic sources. This is traditional architectural history, a dogged search for the provenance of a particular motif, but no less interesting for that. In contrast, Moristella Casciato's essay on the Amsterdam housing as "built utopia" is less successful. Her prose, or her translator's, is clumsy, and the comparison with German Expressionism generally unconvincing. The building as a totality is the theme of Petra Timmer's contribution, which gives a wide-ranging account of the furniture designs

associates. Finally, Karin Gaillard discusses the political and economic background to an essay which might well have been placed at the beginning of the book. It explains how the Amsterdam group, through their direct involvement in the city's "Schoonheidscommissie", were able to create housing that went far beyond the merely utilitarian. While their like-minded counterparts in the Berlin Arbeitsrat für Kunst demanded political power in November 1918, failed to get it and were condemned to paper fantasies, the Amsterdam School achieved the political clout necessary to implement their ideas.

Inevitably there are shortcomings, imposed by the essay format and the brevity of the texts. Important factors, such as the theory and the related question of material and grid systems, are not investigated in depth. The German connection, the influence of concentration on De Klerk at the expense of the rest of the group has also led to oversights. Kramer's De Bijenkorf department store in The Hague, for example, is barely mentioned. These reservations notwithstanding, the book contains a lot of genuinely fine material, and makes a valuable contribution to

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# Materialists before their time

Graham Bradshaw

**JONATHAN DOLLMORE**  
*Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and power in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries*  
312pp. Brighton: Harvester. £19.95.  
07108 03079

*Radical Tragedy* is deliberately shocking. Its critical or interpretative discussions of plays alternate with arguments which are primarily historical, theoretical or polemical, and the book culminates in a lengthy assault on "the dominant tradition of idealism in literary criticism". This is not gratuitous: from the first, Dollimore's argument that the drama was "more radical than has hitherto been allowed" points in two directions. The plays were "more radical", because they show "the emergence in the Renaissance of a conception of subjectivity legitimately identified in terms of a materialist perspective rather than one of essentialist humanism". Critics have "hitherto" refused to "allow" this, because their own criticism is "premised on the residual categories of essentialist humanism and idealist culture".

This two-pronged argument is plainly controversial. As Dollimore rightly observes, "Anti-humanism and its declared objective - the decentring of man - is probably the most controversial aspect of Marxist, structuralist and post-structuralist theory." It is all the more important to remember how much of Dollimore's thesis is familiar and unexceptionable. What is in dispute is not whether the drama was intellectually subversive, but whether it was more radical than has hitherto been allowed. In recent years its "interrogative", "sceptical" character has been explored in several critical studies: to mention only two of the most impressive, Wilbur Sanders's *The Dramatists and the Received Idea* and J. W. Lever's *The Tragedy of State* are both concerned with issues which Dollimore addresses. But Dollimore wants to dissociate himself from such critics.

In his chapter on *King Lear*, he regrets that Lever's "astute" study is vitiated by "existential humanism", and disapproves of Sanders's "humanist preoccupation with the universal counterpoint of essentialist subjectivity". These critics illustrate the dominant tradition of idealism, in their "quasi-religious" concern with "man's responsive suffering and what it reveals... about his essential nature". But is that concern inappropriate to a reading of *Lear*? Dollimore's answer is emphatic: "In fact, the play repudiates the essentialism which the humanist reading of it presupposes." In *Lear*, as in *Troilus*, man is decentred not through misanthropy but in order to make visible social process and its form of ideological misrecognition.

Since I agree with Dollimore that ideology and metaphysics are deeply rooted in our discourse, it seems useful to pause over that last sentence. The words "in order to" confidently and unequivocally attribute to Shakespeare an intention which happily corresponds with the critic's "materialist perspective". Apparently, Shakespeare intended to "repudiate" essentialist humanism, and the play "in fact" does this, but it has been persistently misrepresented within an idealist culture.

To the same sentence, and throughout *Radical Tragedy*, the word "decentred" is ideologically charged and genealogically complex. It has an obvious application to the way in which *Lear* represents "conflicting" contemporary views of Man and Nature; Theodore Spencer might have used this word in arguing, more than forty years ago, that Montaigne smashed "to pieces" the "conventional picture of man's central place in the universe". But the "decentring of man" is also the Marxist's "declared objective". Dollimore gives the word its Althusserian weight, just as he argues that Montaigne's account of custom is "almost identical" with Althusser's account of ideology. In short, the concept of "decentring" provides an ideological rainbow bridge, to carry us from Donne's apprehensive fascination with an experienced loss of centre ("The new philosophy calls all in doubt" towards Derrida's "affirmation", which "then determines the noncentre otherwise than as loss of the centre" (*Writing*,

Dollimore discusses a large number of plays, by Shakespeare, Marlowe, Greville, Chapman, Jonson, Marston and Webster, while also finding room for lengthy discussions of providentialism, subjectivity, social process and concepts of mimesis. The range of material is impressive, but readers will disagree about whether the material is digested or processed. He can discuss so many plays because he has a strongly purposeful sense of their functional relation to his thesis, and some chapters are very short: *Sejannus* gets five pages, for example, and *Bussy D'Amblois* six.

The discussion of *Bussy* very well illustrates Dollimore's interpretative procedures. We are told that the scene in which Bussy dies "begins with one of the most direct repudiations of teleology, providence and natural law to be found anywhere in Jacobean tragedy". We are not told that the passage in question launches a grimly ironic choric debate between two villains: the cynical materialism of Monsieur's speech on Nature is opposed to the sinister, legalistic Guise's chilling defence of hierarchic order. The materialist "repudiations" Dollimore prizes are often, or usually, given to villains like Iago, Edmund, Macbeth or Monsieur. This doesn't necessarily diminish the imaginative impact of what they say, but it does complicate things.

We are told that Bussy's dying speech includes a very radical assertion that "the idea of substantial essence is an illusion". But we are not told that the lines in question verify an idea which Chapman seems to have encountered in Erasmus's *Adagia* ("Homo Bulla"), and which Erasmus took up from Plutarch. Who was the radical?

We are told that Bussy's taunting of Maffé in the first scene illustrates "the recurring emphasis of this play; identity is shown to be constituted not essentially but socially". This echoes Marx's insistence that "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." Employing another ideologically firm *not-but*, Dollimore observes that Bussy's "virtus is shown to be not innate but the effect - and thus the vehicle - of court power". And this obediently echoes Foucault's argument that "The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is... its vehicle."

It also short-circuits the dramatic exploration of this Jacobean *dalibor's* *virtus*: as Nicholas Brooke has shown, Chapman explores the problematic tension between "virtue" and Renaissance ideas of *virtus*. Dollimore knows what to make of Bussy's *virtus* from the first scene; but then the play's dramatic interest survives. Having characterized the "thought" of X (Chapman, Montaigne, etc) in the terms of Y (Foucault, Althusser, etc), the critic discovers that X anticipates or is "almost identical" with Y.

Some plays put up more resistance, and *Antony and Cleopatra* presents a special challenge to the critic who is convinced that power confers meaning. It's hard to approve of Caesar, yet whoring your elster for an empire should make better sense than giving up an empire for a whore. To establish that "power is internal to the relationship" between the lovers, Dollimore argues that "we are told" this "right from the outset" - by Philo, who speaks with "prologue-like authority and foresight". Yet this is not what Philo says; moreover, the play rapidly opposes Antony's rejection of the Roman preoccupation with power, control and self-control ("Let Rome in Tiber melt..."). The nobleness of life / Is to do thus" to Philo's references to "doting" and "measure".

My point is not that we must endorse Antony and dismiss Philo's Roman view, but that Dollimore won't let the "interrogative", "sceptical" play get started. He must show how, if the play "celebrates anything", "it is not the love which transcends power but the sexual infatuation which foregrounds it". Antony is merely infatuated; his fear of the youthful Caesar, his principal male competitor, accounts for his "sexual anxiety", "fear of impotence", and "obsessive" attempts to "reassert his virility". I had never doubted Antony's virility, or seen evidence of Caesar's; but for Dollimore the "an-

relations", and Caesar must be more virile.

Rather uneasily, Dollimore insists that he is not "willfully disregarding the play's captivating poetry", which is "indeed on occasions rapturously expressive of desire". But he isn't specific about the "occasions", and doesn't exploit that odd adjective "captivating". And this suggests why my chief misgiving is not ideological, but rather concerns the complex ways in which we come to apprehend meaning, or thought, in poetic drama. The poetry articulates the drama, and the different registers of prose and verse are constituents of meaning; yet Dollimore seldom discusses the poetry, and the plays might as well be in prose. Nor is he concerned with the way in which dramatic meaning is apprehended in time, as we live through a dynamic sequence of unfolding significances and evolving meanings. In his sonnet on *Lear*, Keats speaks of *burning through* the play. But Dollimore drops in on his plays to collect support for his materialist thesis, and then reports on what the plays "tell" or "show".

## Wisest follies

Denton Fox

**JAMES CRAIGIE AND ALEXANDER LAW**  
(Editors)  
*Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I: Daemonologie, The True Lawe of Free Monarchies, A Counterblast to Tobacco, A Declaration of Sports*  
264pp. Scottish Text Society, Department of English Studies, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA. Price to non-members £12.

The title of this collection could be misinterpreted: the volume does not contain the minor prose of James, but "those of his prose writings which, after his *Basiliicon Doron*, have most kept their interest to the present day". One of the four pieces included, the *Declaration of Sports* (1617), sometimes called the *Book of Sports*, is in fact not by James at all, though issued in his name, but by Thomas Morton, Bishop of Chester. In this short work, designed to be read in churches, "James" orders that his people be allowed to engage in their customary recreations after evening prayers on Sundays - except that "the meanest sort of People" are prohibited from bowling. The customary recreation of the Long Parliament, as it turned out, was repeatedly to order the public burning of this pamphlet.

Of the other works, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies*, published anonymously in 1598, is also of interest mostly to specialists. James's theories about the nature of kingship do not seem complicated: the king is the head, and his subjects are the body; he is the father, and his subjects are the children. The worst of all abuses - a very natural feeling in a sixteenth-century Scots king - is rebellion. A *Counterblast to Tobacco* (1604) is a fairly lightweight work, but one which will doubtless give pleasure to the more violent members of the Anti-Smokers League. Some of James's arguments perhaps no longer have force, such as that tobacco should be eschewed because of its low social origins: It was used by the "wilde, godlesse, and sleish *Indians*... as a atting and vna-vourie Antidot" for syphilis. But most of his arguments are surprisingly timeless: there is the dire medical illustration (smoking creates "blemishes in the inward parts of men... an vicious and oily kinde of Scote, as batti bene found in some great *Tobacco* takers, that after their death were opened"); the *Good Food Guide* theme (smokers make "the filthy smoke and stinke thereof, to exhale atwart the dishes, and infect the aire, when very often, men that abhorre it are at their repast"); and (be argument from honest thrift ("let the Gentry of this land beare witness, some of them bestow-ling three, some four hundred pounds a yeere upon this precious stinke, which I am sure might be bestowed upon many farre better uses"). James may have been smoked at too much to his youth; his tutor, George Buchanan, was apparently a lover of tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca saluifera cunctis. languoribus herbarum*).

The longest and most interesting piece in the volume is the *Daemonologie* (1597), a dialogue between James and a witch, who knows all about, this is, under some circumstances, the

us, without sufficient regard for character, no text, or the given sequence of scenes.

Shakespeare's radical scepticism appears in the plays' opposed valuations of character, and in the multiple perspectives on such issues as honour, natural law, suicide or the divine right of kings. Montaigne's radical scepticism appears in the way his mind repeatedly turns on itself: he will not deny that there are witches, or miracles, and only deems that much reason can establish the genuineness of either phenomenon. But Dollimore doesn't see radical scepticism. He wants to find his materialist ideology anticipated or confirmed in plays which "subvert" providentialism, "to fute" the idea of natural law, "repudiate" humonism and "dispose of" the "myth" of resilient human essence. And, like many materialists who enter into an alliance with post-structuralism, he wants a special exemption for his ideology: Derrida's argument that there is getting beyond metaphysics draws the same comment, "perhaps in this case too idealism".

tical but very willing to learn. The work is essentially a proof of the existence of the power of witches, and an explanation of it as servants of Satan, they must be killed. James's arguments are not unreasonable. I once accepted his premises, that everything in the Bible is literally true (and hence without effect), and that confessions are equally valid when extorted under torture (as in which the Reformation caused to flourish handsomely in Scotland). James even had direct proof: one witch told him every word that had passed between him and Anne of Denmark on their wedding night.

He was not a lion-hearted man, but he was not to be fearful. Of his six immediate predecessors on the Scottish throne, none had reigned post early middle age, and only James VI (who died at thirty) died a natural death. During 1590s Bothwell chased James VI around Scotland and his chances of longevity must have seemed very small. It is hardly surprising that most of the witches discussed had dealings with the king, and that their plots were instigated by Bothwell. A belief in witchcraft can be, after all, fairly comforting: it explains that the misadventures that befall one are the work of Satan's emissaries and not one's own fault, and also, at least in James's version, gives the assurance that witches can have no power over someone who virtuously pursues and punishes them. A reader is left, though, with the feeling that the old joke about James being the worst fool in Christendom was not for off the wall.

James Craigie, who was born in 1895 and was for forty years a monist of the Scottish Text Society, was still working on this edition when he died in 1981; it was completed by his friend Alexander Law. The editor has all the old-fashioned virtues: it is, for the most part, extremely careful and thorough, restrained and impersonal, and clearly the result of an immense amount of hard work. Occasionally there are passages that doubtless would have been tidied up if Dr Craigie had lived to finish it: the fourth, sixth, seventh, eleventh and thirteenth annotations to the *Counterblast to Tobacco*, for example, seem to me to be wrong. And just occasionally less restraint would be welcome: a reader who does not know that "Mentale can mean 'senior'" will be occasionally baffled by the *Daemonologie*; and it would be interesting to know what the "Mentale" in the "Mentale" means. If hardly vital, to hear about the later changes to the *Daemonologie* is seldom objectionable.

The texts printed here preserve the capitalization and punctuation of the early prints, which if not strictly necessary, (modern) styles of the *Daemonologie* and the *Counterblast* are available) is seldom objectionable. Some surviving manuscript fragments, of the *monologie* in James's own hand are printed as an appendix: these show that James wrote, at least while he lived in Scotland, in Scots, with some southern forms. His Edinburgh printers Anglicized his spellings, but not his grammar or vocabulary. The results are occasionally odd: a reader will have to remember, for instance, that while (*as quhill*) can mean "until", and "than", and should not condemn James for using, as an ending for plurals, *the* (as in, "between the tender compassion and the

## A bout of commentary

David Nokes

**A.D. NUTTALL**  
*Pope's Essay on Man*  
250pp. Allen and Unwin. £15.  
004 8000175

"Pope has had bad luck." Thus Leavis began an influential essay in 1936, lamenting the lack of serious critical attention to Pope till that date. More recently a different form of bad luck has befallen writers like Pope; writers undoubtedly "great", yet uncomfortably remote in their idioms and preoccupations and uncompromising in the demands they make of modern readers. They have been scaffolded with handbooks, toured by student guides, prefaced, surveyed, filtered and digested in a variety of handy pocket-sized "criticisms". The primary motivation for such guides is not essentially critical. They derive not from an individual's compulsion to offer a new interpretation but rather from a publisher's perception of a market opportunity among the students seeking an amiable *vade-mecum* to help them through the thickets of set texts.

A.D. Nuttall's study of Pope's *Essay on Man* belongs to a series, the Unwin Critical Library, whose intentions, set out in a preface by the General Editor, Claude Rawson, are to provide volumes "which a university teacher would normally recommend... embodying the present state of knowledge and opinion in a

conveniently accessible form". It would be absurd to decry the usefulness of such formulaic blends of contemporary views, but these works do raise a number of questions - both theoretical and practical - about the nature of criticism itself. Pope in particular has attracted a number of such guides in recent years, and the result is a growing imbalance between works of primary criticism which explore or redefine our understanding of his poetry and works of secondary or pre-digested "criticism" conveniently packaging "the present state of knowledge and opinion". In one thing Professor Nuttall is to be applauded. In tackling the *Essay on Man* he confronts head-on the philosophical monolith at the centre of Pope's achievement which resolutely defies the modern tendency to interpret his poetry essentially in terms of irony and social satire. Yet in approaching the poem at this "student guide" level, Nuttall is asking for trouble. A guide to *The Dunciad* can map out the topography of Dulness in the streets of London, indicate a path through the jungle of classical and contemporary allusions, and rewarded the patient explorer with a vision of a surreal world of metaphorical miscegenation and apocalyptic fantasy. But too often Nuttall ports the curtains of Pope's rhetoric to reveal only a platitude or solecism.

Describing his study as "Crousazian", which is a polite way of saying hostile, he is forever catching Pope out or ticking him off. "Mere bluster", he asserts of one assertive couplet.

## Secrets between men

Dominic Hibberd

**DESMOND GRAHAM**  
*The Truth of War: Owen, Blunden and Rosenberg*  
168pp. Carcanet. £12.95.  
085635 4961

In one of his 1917 letters, Wilfred Owen records an officer refusing to join a leave train bound for England: "Aw I decline. I absolutely decline, to travel in a coach where there are - law - Men!" The succinctness is borrowed from contemporary *Punch* captions, but the irony in the last word comes from a soldier-poet who knew what had turned men into "Men" and how deep a betrayal was represented by the officer's response.

Desmond Graham has perceptive things to say about that sort of implication in the use of voice and language in Owen's poetry. *The Truth of War* is a most illuminating and readable study of war poems by three supposedly well-known writers. Graham demonstrates again and again how little-known they really are. This process of making the familiar unfamiliar is central to his purpose. He argues that we have come to assume too much not only about Owen (too "easy" for advanced study), Blunden (really a nature poet) and Rosenberg (never quite got his act together), but also the experience they described. The "truth of war" needs to be rediscovered as, in Owen's phrase, the "truth untold", a "secret" known only to those who shared in it. Failure to see that it must and should be beyond our knowing is dangerous in politics and lazy in criticism.

Nothing how all three poets draw attention to the gap between what they wrote and what was suffered, Graham is instructive on their deliberate, complex artistry. He makes a powerful case for Owen, whose artistic competence has sometimes been doubted. The shifting registers, elaborate diction and ambiguities of poems such as "Strange Meeting" and "S.I.W." are shown beyond doubt to be the result not of callowness or residual Romanticism but of a searching insight into the nature of war and language. There are analyses, admirable for their economy as well as for their shrewdness, of Owen's two-edged use of military terms ("blind", "trench", "creeping", "fire", "spitting", "looses"), the boorish voice in "A. T. T.", or the double voice in "The Sentry". Graham steers our response away from sentimentality and the wrong sort of "pity" by pointing to Owen's ruthlessness and authority. War ridges all emotions. "It is the only way to the truth... beyond the lie" (p. 10).

reality of war which reveals the nature of its assault upon humanity."

Discussions of Owen can now take texts and dates more or less for granted, but Blunden has yet to be fully edited. Graham is perhaps the first critic to recognize that the best of his war poems were written with *Underones of War* in 1924-7, not earlier, and that their "subversive" quality is absent from Blunden's work before 1919 or much after 1930. The "deceitful calm" of these poems contains a deeply felt criticism of war, expressed as much by what is not said as by what is. Why was it "comely" and "reviving" (the language is Milton's) to see "houses / With women chattering and green grass thriving"? The stress on "green" does not come from the evasive nature poet that Blunden is often made out to be.

If one finds the Rosenberg chapter a little less stimulating than the others, that may be because he, unlike Owen and Blunden, was fully an artist before he saw the trenches. His poetry makes less use of the new language of war than theirs does, and its technique is more painterly, less verbal. But Graham brings out the politics of his poetry more clearly than other critics have done, rightly treating him as a poet who knew not only what he wanted to say but also how to say it. The concluding discussion of "Dead Man's Dump" finely traces Rosenberg's view of the war, as the blind force of militarism drive the limbers to the very place where a man is reaching out for help - "So" (so, implying result, manner, inevitability, or, as in an anecdote, no connection at all) "we crashed round the bend... And our wheels grazed his dead face." The touch that was lodged for the unintended, unavoidable, unfelt - so.

New readings. Invite disagreement, but Graham is hard to fault. There is one small slip in his discussion of Blunden's "The Zonnebeke Road": the object of "freeze" ("man... freeze you back with... disdain") are "dumbness", "death" and "shreds", not other men. In assuming the freezing look to represent war-induced insensibility between comrades, rather than soldierly courage, Graham exposes a weakness in the political stand on which his book is founded. He tends to overlook the impassioned admiration and love which suffuses Blunden's poems about soldiers. That element in the "truth of war" is not to the modern taste, either in politics or in criticism; but it needs to be recognized. In Owen's story from the railway platform, there are two directions in the irony of that word "Men!": not only down ("Mao, gaps for filling") but also up ("secret men who know their secret safe"; the secret being that true human values were to be found only at the front - beyond the lie).



"This is the very nadir of Augustan poetry", he remarks elsewhere. His criticisms often betray a schoolmasterly impatience. "One wishes to pluck Pope by the sleeve and calm him somewhat by explaining...". Such informal admonitions would be more convincing if Nuttall's own style were free of the tendency to reductive formulas and clichés which he deprecates in Pope. But when he tells us "the situation is not quite so out and dried" or that Pope "likes to have his cake and eat it", we sense little intellectual authority in the argument. The book strives for a "chatty" style, no doubt to make the poetry more "accessible". Thus the *Epistle to Miss Blount* is described as "typical to good Pope" and *The Dunciad* praised for the "sheer power" of the verse.

But the real problem with this book lies in its organization. Nuttall has produced what is

## Trade between giants

Sean French

**CARLOS BAKER**  
*The Ecoblog Green: Romanticism, Modernism and the phenomena of transference*  
377pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £32.70.  
0691 064377

Literary criticism is a collaborative process and, as F. R. Leavis argued, the crucial collaboration is that between the critic and his audience. But what if you have no confidence in any common ground with your audience at all? Carlos Baker seems to conduct his argument within a literary-critical version of Forster's *Moravia Caves*, that symbolic locale where there is no returning echo at all, simply a blank "bou-oum" representing the ultimate indifference of the universe.

The indifference of the universe is, however, a small affair when compared with the indifference of the American undergraduate in the face of the study of poetry, or so at least the elementary level of the opening chapter, "William Wordsworth", would suggest.

For all those modern readers to whom poetry matters, the continual reexamination of the poetry of the past is quite as important an obligation as the encouragement of good poetry now... If we believe that there have been literary giants among the poets of our own age - and who would deny such stature to Yeats and Frost and Eliot and Stevens and Auden? - it is well to remember that these men were neither the first nor the last to have mastered the skill of uttering those true and lively words by which poetry imparts its wisdom and its melodies upon the innumerable pages of human experience... One of the giants whose ancestral voices still echo among us is William Wordsworth.

How can you write a study of the complex influence of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley and Keats on Yeats, Pound, Frost, Stevens and Auden for an audience to whom you first have to explain that it is worth reading old poetry?

Professor Baker's subtitle implies mis-

essentially an extended commentary on the poem, a blow-by-blow, couplet-by-couplet paraphrase and annotation. This approach, while illuminating a number of knotty points, prevents him from engaging in a thorough exploration of the major issues treated in the poem. Several interesting questions, such as Pope's concept of equality, the influence of Pascal, or the uneasy strain of determinism threaded through the poem, are introduced but left undeveloped as Nuttall proceeds with his commentary, tripping Pope up and dressing him down. At one point he likens Pope to a "dazed boxer" and one can easily sympathize. This book is like an extended bout of jebbing and weaving.

Several of the limitations of this study are inherent in the difficulty of the task that Nuttall has set himself. Modern students encountering the *Essay* undoubtedly need assistance to put the poem in context and comprehend the contradictions within it. And it is clearly more honest to face up to these contradictions than to allow students to slide past this awkward work by pretending that Pope was essentially a creator of mock-horror satires and witty vignettes. Yet the *Essay on Man* is not only demanding but also deeply unsatisfying both as poetry and philosophy, and any critical summary of this kind is likely to strike an embroiled, apologetic note. Even so, there are some serious weaknesses in this study. Nuttall acknowledges in an early chapter that the *Essay* was conceived as part of a grand intellectual programme of poems designed to include much of the material later contained in the *Moral Essays*. The relationship of the *Essay* to the *Moral Essays* is therefore both intimate and structural, but this book contains no examination of these poems. Instead it concludes with a curious ten-page coda on Johnson's *Rasselas*, which Nuttall describes as "petrified" work of "almost pathological pessimism". Among the misprints are some which add a little surreal comedy to the book, as when Keats is credited with the sentiment, "A think of beauty is a joy forever".

leadingly that the book is an analysis of the psychology of the psychology of literary influence, but it emerges that the author is using the term "transference" not in its psychoanalytic application but in the more pedestrian sense in which, say, Yeats transfers a line of Shelley into a poem of his own.

Perhaps sensibly, Baker makes few general observations on the nature of influence. The structure of the book is simple: he begins with a chapter each on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats, offering "critical assessments" composed in a whimsical idiom entirely suitable for a study of this kind ("If Byron was mad it was but north-northwest." "Opium was not for Coleridge the 'onlie begueter' of daydreams."). But the method of argument is eccentric. In the final lines of the dull Wordsworth chapter he cites the "alleged shrinkage of power" in the later Wordsworth and then claims startlingly that this view needs to be corrected. No less startlingly, the chapter then finishes and the subject drops.

His Coleridge chapter reads like a review of Katherine Coburn's edition of Coleridge's *Notebooks* that has been padded out with some pages on Kubla Khan and a single passing reference to the Ancient Mariner. Perhaps the chapter on Keats is the most entirely risible ("Not only had he succeeded in making Nature seem lovelier and livelier than in actuality she was, but he had also seized upon a thousand truths, refashioning them through the singularity of his perception and the force of his imagination into poems that would survive him for centuries") but they are all entirely dispensable, particularly in a field now so thoroughly covered.

*Urban Milton: The Latin poetry*, which is Volume XIX of *Milton Studies* (306pp. University of Pittsburgh Press. \$32.95. 08229 3492 2) includes contributions by Christopher Collins, William A. Sessions, Diane Kelsey McCollay and the editors, James A. Freeman and Anthony Low, together with a seventy-seven-page annotated bibliography of Milton's Latin Greek verse by John B. Dillon.

John B. Dillon



# The soul of brevity

S. S. Prawer

**VALERIE SHAW**  
*The Short Story: A critical introduction*  
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Right at the beginning of her book, Valerie Shaw makes clear that she is in no sense a prescriptive critic. Questions like "What should the short story do?" hold no interest for her; she prefers to ask what special satisfactions may be derived from the reading of short stories, and how such satisfactions depend upon different literary techniques and narrative strategies. She has assiduously perused many short fictions and has ordered her reflections on them into eight chapters. These discuss, in turn, estimates and explanations of the possibilities of the short story by some of its most eminent practitioners; the interplay of fantasy and realism within its deliberately narrowed confines; techniques of narration (from Poe's "aensation story" to James's "scenic method"); and, in a separate chapter, apparently "artless" narration; character-drawing; settings, places, and communities; favoured themes and subject-matter. The work concludes with a chapter entitled "The Splintering Frame" which offers intelligent discussions of twentieth-century texts by Joyce, Hemingway and Borges among others.

Despite its frequent concern with modern writing, this "Critical Introduction" turns out to be a pleasantly old-fashioned book. The author is almost programmatically insouciant about recent developments. In narrative theory, she is happy to speak of "the reader" of a story as though neither Riffaterre nor Iser had ever set pen to paper, and as though Suleiman and Crossman had never put together *The Reader in the Text*. What she has to say about narrators and authorial distancing takes no account even of Wayne Booth's famous distinctions - to say nothing of more recent refinements. For her, Bertels, Derrida, Foucault and Norman Holland have written in vain. She casually mentions that Maupassant's "The Olive Orchard" omits a scene that might have been expected to form its climax, but fails to go on from this to a discussion of the central role narrative gaps and absences have played in literary theory, from Ingarden to Macherey. She rightly remarks on the way in which the domestic routine of Flaubert's *Félicité* lends itself to a narrative method that summarizes long periods of time ("Every day . . . all the year round . . . for several months . . ."); but she never thinks of relating this to the typological analyses of order, duration, frequency, mood and voice in Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* - the one book, surely, which no student of narrative can afford to miss. Though she once mentions Propp (via Gerald Prince), Ms Shaw situates her criticism in a garden of pre-structuralist and pre-deconstructionist innocence. She shows herself as happy with notions like "organic unity" or "interplay of tensions and antitheses" as any New Critic; her discussions would fit snugly into a teacher's manual designed to accompany the Brooks and Warren volume *Understanding Fiction* which was first published just over forty years ago.

Like *Understanding Fiction*, *The Short Story* casts its analytic net beyond the confines of Britain and the USA; but there is nothing in its discussion of German, French or Russian authors to suggest that such writers wrote in lan-

to deal with their fictions in the original tongue might make one miss a nuance or two. Nor has Ms Shaw taken pains to acquaint herself with the best recent discussions of such works, even where these have appeared in the English language. What she says of the German Novelle, for instance, could have been gleaned (minus the misprints which rob "Novelle" of its initial capital and transfigure "Gothelf" into "Goff-helf") from a hasty perusal of the book by Bennett and Waidson; John M. Ellis's highly pertinent *Narration in the German Novelle*, with its judicious combination of theoretical insight and sensitive critical appreciation, does not even figure in the Bibliography. It is all too characteristic, alas, that this "critical introduction" should be content with quoting large chunks of Janouch's dubious *Conversations with Kafka* as though what is there reported were authenticated Kafka utterance. Few Kafka scholars would now be prepared to be quite so trusting. Fortunately, however, Ms Shaw allowed Roy Pascal's essay in J. P. Stern's *The World of Franz Kafka* to lead her towards an interesting argument in her discussion of Kafka's "parables" and animal fables; this should whet her readers' appetite for Pascal's analyses of that author's shorter fiction in his posthumously published *Kafka's Narratives*.

Ms Shaw presents her subject in an associative, unschematic way, omitting material one would have thought essential to any typology of shorter fiction. Why, for instance, does she treat Poe's contribution to the theory, practice and evolution of the short story without discussing the figure of Dupin and the origins of detective fiction? It would have been particularly interesting to have had her views on "The Purloined Letter" which has figured so largely in recent critical and theoretical disquisitions. Why is there no mention of the Sherlock Holmes tales, which have been at least as influential as the tales of O. Henry, of which we hear mere than enough?

No one, however, can read far in *The Short Story* without discovering that the book's author has taste, literary flair, and a wide knowledge of her primary sources. There are excellent discussions of texts as varied as Henry James's "The Real Thing" and the "Burr Rabbit" tales of Joel Chandler Harris, and many insights into the literary practices and theoretical preoccupations of a wide variety of authors from Poe to J. L. Borges. Ms Shaw demonstrates "the permanent capacity of short fiction to return to its ancient origin" in folk-tale, legend and *exemplum*; the conflict and reconciliation of divergent impulses - towards poetry and towards reportage - in the short story; the short story's frequent preoccupation with ways of transcending its inherent limits; the manner in which writers of shorter fiction "discover" (in the double sense of "finding out" and "revealing") the hidden beauty and terror of obscure lives; the short story's concern with "frontier experiences" both geographical and spiritual; the elevation of the contingent into the symbolic; and the way in which locality can become a metaphor for conditions in which habitual assumptions are called into question. She pinpoints the technical considerations that impel the short story towards certain kinds of subject; discusses the effect of periodical and newspaper publication; and links the evolution of shorter fiction to "impressionism and Jugendstil in the visual arts". There are also remarks on connections between nineteenth-century fiction and Victorian illustrations which usefully supplement Jean Froitz-Blaekall's analysis of the way in which Cruikshank's illustrations of *Oliver Twist* fascinated Henry James, and how the impulses they gave him surfaced in *The Turn of the Screw*.

James is one of many practitioners of the short story whose observations on their art are copiously quoted in Valerie Shaw's book; the volume can, in fact, be seen as a mini-*anthology* of such observations by a wide variety of authors from Poe to Elizabeth Bowen. Among such quotations those from the writings of V. S. Pritchett stand out as constantly illuminating. "A short story," Pritchett tells us in his essay on Flannery O'Connor, "ought to be faultless without being mechanical. The wrong word, a misplaced paragraph, an inadequate phrase or a convenient explanation, start fatal leaks in this kind of writing which is

must be totally sustained. . . . A short story must plant its situation - and promise another - in its opening line. . . ." This is quoted in Pritchett's *The Talebearers: Essays on English, American and other writers* - Ms Shaw does not include it in her book, though she clearly agrees with its tenor. It has obviously grown out of Pritchett's own practice, and is highly pertinent to that of many other writers of shorter fictions. A generous selection of Pritchett's wise and urbane essays on masters of fiction from Richardson to Saul Bellow, from his autobiographies and travel-books, from his Clark Lectures on Meredith and English Comedy, and from his biographical studies, may now be found in the new "Pritchett Reader", *The Other Side of the Frontier*. Open the book where you like, and you hear a distinctive, an unmistakable voice.

A little of Steme goes a long way - as long as nearly 200 years, for his flavour never dies in the English novel. It is true we cannot live on tears, fancy cakes and curry. But, like him out of the English tradition; point out that George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Conrad - the assembled major genius of the English novel - ignore him; explain that he is not Henry James; despite him because he created "characters" a form of dramatic personification of fashion for a generation more - and still his insinuating touch of nature comes through.

Without denigrating (and, indeed, without naming) Leavis's *Great Tradition* these three sentences gently, wittily and wisely show up the limitations of Leavis's view of the English novel. *The Other Side of the Frontier* contains many more evocations of the "flavour" of great authors; but its chief glory is the section of nine short stories with which the new volume opens, which makes one wonder why Ms Shaw's book contains no discussion of Pritchett as a practitioner (rather than a theorist) of short fiction. The case for seeing in him "the best living English short story writer" has been well made out in Valentine Cunningham's review of Pritchett's *Collected Stories* in the *TLS* of June 25, 1982. This pointed, judiciously, to Pritchett's sense of "the illustrative moment, the representative character, of a given time and place"; his constant devotion to "the honourable and important business of fiction as social observing"; his ability to make "human moments into epiphanies through memorable phrases, vivid tags and scraps of idiolect captured by roaming and plundering the language registers of an extraordinary breadth of classes and sects, odd social crannies, dark and curious corners of behaviour". Readers can now test all this, together with the extraordinary moral delicacy and human sympathy so characteristic of Pritchett, by investing in the new Penguin edition. They might begin their reading, not with a well-known masterpiece like "When My Girl Comes Home", but with "The Snail", perhaps, which is not included in *The Other Side of the Frontier* but which exemplifies, in smallest compass, all those virtues of the short story that Pritchett celebrated in his essay on Flannery O'Connor.

Pritchett has learnt from many masters - but if he has one particular affinity, it is surely to Chekhov, with whom he shares a secure sense of the interdependence of place, time and person; an ability to suffuse setting and incident with symbolic significance; a unique blend of lyric and tragedy; and a preference for open rather than neatly closed forms. Flannery O'Connor's aunt, who thought "nothing happens in a story unless someone gets married or shot at the end of it" would not relish the writings of either author. Unlike Pritchett, Chekhov figures largely in Ms Shaw's book, both as a theorist and as a practitioner - she is particularly good at showing how Chekhov's characters suggest forces larger than the individual self, and how his landscapes create what has been called a "silent character" in the background of his stories. Her account is robbed of its full impact, however, because it fails to set Chekhov sufficiently firmly into the context of his place and time, and because it is unable to show how the cast of his mind and his thematic preoccupations reflect themselves in details of his style. Here, as it happens, English readers have a most useful guide: P. M. Bitsill's *Chekhov's Art: A stylistic analysis*, translated from the Russian by T. W. Chapman and E. J. Cruise and brought out by Ardis Publishers of Ann Arbor in 1983. Bitsill, who died in 1983,

by a close look at recurrent words, images, phrases and grammatical constructions which he took over from, or shared with, other Russian authors, and used his findings to highlight or "foreground" stylistic traits that could be shown to be peculiar to Chekhov himself. His Chekhov's world-view by means of a close scrutiny of a handful of carefully selected details - notably "The Bishop", whose analysis shows Bitsill at his sensitive best.

Unlike this Russian critic Ms Shaw has to rely on Chekhov in translation. She has found a good guide in Ronald Hingley's *Anton Chekhov*, with occasional forays into the Penguin versions by David Magarshack; but also, very properly, pays tribute to the influence that Constance Garnett's translations have had on generations of English readers and writers. The "open" form of Chekhov's "The Bishop", in its Garnett version, seemed to Hingley perfectly in tune with her own mind and mood.

We are by this time alive to the fact that loose translations are legitimate; that is to say, though we leave us feeling melancholy and perhaps uneasy, yet somehow they provide a resting-point for the mind - a solid object casting its shade of reflection and speculation. The fragments of which it is composed may have the air of having come together by chance.

Not everyone was equally susceptible to the charm of this English Chekhov - O. E. Lawrence, for instance, could see in him only "a second-rate writer and a willy wet-ly" as thought it part of his task to help the British reading public get over "the Tchekhovian inter-influenza effect of inertia and willlessness".

It is quite wrong, however, to think of Constance Garnett as the pioneer of Chekhov translations in English. Her thirteen volumes (which are now making a welcome reappearance in paperback) came out between 1916 and 1922; they had been preceded as early as 1905 by a version of twelve Chekhov stories from the pen of R. E. C. Long, which went through several editions before it found its widest readership, from 1914 onwards, through its inclusion in Duckworth's *Readers Library*. By including two of Chekhov's gloomiest stories ("The Black Monk" and the magnificent "Ward No. 6") at the beginning and end of his selection Long predisposed readers to see in Chekhov "gloomy Russian", akin to such writers as Gogol, whom the same publishers, Duckworth, had introduced to the English public in 1912 by means of a volume of stories which included "The Red Flower" - entitled "The Scarlet Blossom" by the translator, Captain Ronald Smith. It was therefore left to Constance Garnett to reveal Chekhov's full range and range in an English-speaking public, from the most ferocious tales to the heights reached in the most colly titled "Tedious Tale" or "Dreary Story".

A truly extraordinary, fascinating story, said Thomas Mann, "whose atmosphere of strange gentle sadness is unlike anything else in world literature." The Ecco Press reprint of the Garnett versions includes, in its first two volumes, "The Red Flower" and "The Scarlet Blossom" by the translator, Captain Ronald Smith. It was therefore left to Constance Garnett to reveal Chekhov's full range and range in an English-speaking public, from the most ferocious tales to the heights reached in the most colly titled "Tedious Tale" or "Dreary Story".

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## Paperbacks

### Archaeology

PAUL MACKENDRICK. *The Mute Stones Speak: The Story of Archaeology in Italy*. 491pp. Norton. \$9.95. 0 393 30119 2. First published in 1960 (and reviewed in the *TLS* of October 12, 1962), this account of the story of archaeology in Italy takes the reader from early Neolithic sites, through the rise of Rome and Latium, the remains of the Republic and Empire, down to the time of the Emperor Constantine. Professor Mackendrick's knowledge of the monuments and remains which he describes is considerable and the enthusiasm with which he writes of his subject comes over on every page. His skill is to breathe life into the subject, for archaeology is a great art and a poor science. In discussing the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, for example, the author writes: "What archaeology has presented to us here, as at its best it always does, is not things but people, at work and play, in house and workshop, worshipping and blaspheming, and after their fashion patrolling the arts. So vividly does archaeology reveal them that we are moved to say with Francis Bacon, 'These are the ancient times, when the world is ancient, and not those which we account ancient, by a computation backwards from ourselves.'"

L. D.  
 AUGUSTUS HARE. *The Years With Mother*. 310pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 0400 6. Augustus Hare's *The Story of My Life*, first published in six large volumes between 1896 and 1900, really needs to be read at its full length for all the author's oddities and snobberies to be savoured at their best. For those with less stamina, Malcolm Bames's two-volume abridgement (of which this first volume was originally published in 1952 and reviewed in the *TLS* of February 20, 1953) has been an acceptable substitute. It is an amiable rag-bag of memoirs of a fully extended family, in which the upper clergy and the middling nobility of mid-Victorian England met each other, not least at the deathbeds and funerals with which Hare himself was so fascinated. The editor has included a satisfactory proportion of Hare's travelling reminiscences, as allusive and curiously learned as his once so fashionable travel books, and there are plenty of country-house hauntings. Net all the illustrations of the original have been reproduced in this reprint, but there are sufficient wood-engravings to give it an agreeable period flavour.

T. G. D. F.

### Bibliography

LUCIEN FEBVRE and HENRI-JEAN MARTIN. *The Coming of the Book*. Translated by David Gerard. 378pp. Varso Editions. £5.95. 0 86091 797 5. As Theodore Rebb remarked in his review of this translation when it first appeared in 1977 (reviewed in the *TLS* of October 14), the even by then considerable impact of *L'Apparition du Livre* (1958) had been diminished in the English-speaking world for want of a translation. Seven years later, the impact of the translation can be seen to have been somewhat blunted for want of a paperback, and this reprint of the unrevised text can be warmly welcomed. *L'Histoire du Livre* has spread widely as a concept, and it is interesting to compare the current orthodoxy with the magisterial statement made in Febvre's last work almost thirty years ago. While spheres of intellectual and bibliographical history have been illuminated by this seminal *Annales*-school study of the impact of printing between 1450 and 1800, and the following that so French-centric a study has received in so many other countries is evidence of its continuing impact.

G. N.

### Biography and memoirs

HAROLD ACTON. *Nancy Mitford: A memoir*. 252pp. Hamish Hamilton. £4.95. 0 241 11278 8. First published in 1975 and reviewed at length by Alastair Forbes in the *TLS* of September 12 that year, Sir Harold Acton's affectionate personal memoir is remarkable for its combination of high-spirited Mitfordian "thrills" with a deeply moving account of Nancy Mitford's sufferings from an ill-diagnosed cancer in the last years of her life. There is much more to it than an anthology of giggles and groans, not least in its depiction of the dedicated professionalism Nancy Mitford applied to all her writing, however light the result appeared. Sir Harold draws widely on her excellent letters, and provides a foretaste of many more that may be hoped for in Lady Selina Hastings's forthcoming biography. Even when that appears, this *Memoir* will retain its value as a characteristically stylish portrait of a notable personality.

A. S. B.

HENRY CHANNON. *Chips: The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon*. Edited by Robert Rhodes James. 607pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 057003 9. New that much of the excitement which attended the publication of these diaries in 1967 (they were reviewed in the *TLS* of November 16 that year) has evaporated. It is possible to see more clearly what sort of history of the period they provide, and what sort of person the highly sociable PFB was. The diaries cover the period 1934-53, describing in detail what took place in the House of Commons, the years are recorded in very personal terms. Sir Henry looked, whether in the House or in the garden, as though he were a man about town and his times.

there are glimpses of its more momentous aspects: "Now the Nazis and the Bolsheviks have combined to destroy civilization, and the outlook for the world looks ghastly." Channon's record over appeasement is no better than the rest of London Society's; his love of luxury and his deep snobbery tell against him. But his frankness over his own vanities (about his appearance and his possessions) and his recurring self-doubt make him a more endearing figure than Harold Nicolson - whose diaries are also published in this Penguin "Lives and Letters" series - while his rather dashing style creates a likeable, vivid and amusing portrait of a man about town and his times.

L. D.

LAWRENCE WRIGHT. *Clean and Decent: the history of the bathroom and the W.C.* 282pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £4.95. 0 7100 465 0. This agreeable miscellaneous history has been well known since its first publication in 1960 (reviewed in the *TLS* of March 11, 1960) as an amusing, but never sniggering, introduction to its large and varied subject. It is now beginning to seem rather dated, both in its references, including the architectural and archaeological work of two decades, and in illustrations, which have a grey and fuzzy look that has not been improved in this reprint and which contrasts unfavourably with well illustrated works like Lucinda Lambton's *Temples of Convenience* (1978). In subject-matter, too, fashion has sometimes overtaken Mr Wright's text. It will be a pity not to be able to refer to it, for example, for the dates of the present sauna revival or the Jacuzzi craze, as one can so conveniently do for hammams, bagnios, temples of Hygieia, boghouses, nightmen, Moule's earth closets, and the very many and often eccentric contrivances that fall within the scope of a digressive social history of the apparatus of ablation and evacuation.

T. G. D. F.

CHRISTOPHER HUBERT. *The Personal History of Samuel Johnson*. 364pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 00 6648 9. This biography, which first appeared in 1971 (and was reviewed in the *TLS* of December 10 that year) is reissued to coincide with the Johnson bicentenary celebrations. Although it has not been revised to take account of the scholarship of a decade and more, its thorough underlying documentation means that it does not seem unduly out of date. But *The Personal History* now has to compete with the biographies by John Wain (1974) and Jackson Bates (1978) as well as the second volume of James L. Clifford's uncompleted trilogy (1979). In comparison with these the defects of Hubert's anecdotal approach constantly show through. However skilfully compiled and whatever the documentary authenticity, such a succession of stories gives all too little impression of the intellectual depth of the man. Literary work must in such a setting take second place to Boswellian anecdote, and oddity and rudeness find themselves falsely at a premium. For a true impression of Johnson's range and depth of mind and spirit other biographies must be preferred.

A. S. B.

NANCY MITFORD. *Voltaire in Love*. 288pp. Hamish Hamilton. £4.95. 0 241 11288 5. First published in 1957 and reviewed in the *TLS* of October 25 that year. The reviewer wrote: "Miss Mitford is an expert cicerone, plays off all the human contacts, makes the right points of irony and deduction, the expected understatement, the deftly remarks. Her narrative is smooth and elegant but for some awkward transients between past and present tense when reporting the substance of letters."

A. N. WILSON. *The Life of Milton*. 278pp. Oxford University Press. £3.50. 0 19 281473 7. First published in 1983 and reviewed in the *TLS* of February 4 that year. The reviewer wrote "A. N. Wilson's life of Milton strikes one as having arisen out of the work, and keeps closely in touch with it, the prose in particular, but he uses the existing sources deftly and conscientiously and his interpretation of events is humane and level-headed. It is a considerable qualification for the task that he has a grasp of the finer points and pointlessnesses of theological disputation and more is able to see them as the living things they were."

A. J. G. H.

### History

BRUCE LENMAN. *The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746*. 320pp. Methuen. £5.95. 0 413 56210 7. First published in 1981 and reviewed in the *TLS* of March 27 that year. The reviewer wrote "The book is far too deep and insipid to summarize. There is, deliberately, no military narrative: that has been done many times already. But Lenman deals in general terms with the military and political factors which led to failure after failure: incompetent leadership, foolish optimism and successive let-downs by the French. He is at his best in his analysis of discontent as a factor encouraging Jacobitism."

L. D.

### Literature

PAUL FOOT. *Red Shelley*. 293pp. Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N.4. £4.50. 0 906224 13 6. First published in 1981 and reviewed in the *TLS* of July that year. The reviewer wrote: "Mr Foot's title gives a fair idea of his purpose and procedure. He comes to Shelley as a revolutionary socialist in quest of an ancestor; both by a new definition of Shelley's achievement, and a new frankness in exhibiting it, he aims to convince his readers that Shelley was a political writer; having once recognized this, he thinks they will be in a position to separate out the true prophet from the common dreamer who occasionally harboured common prejudices."

RAYMOND WILLIAMS. *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*. 196pp. The Hogarth Press. £3.95. 0 701 20558 X. First published in 1970 and reviewed in the *TLS* of June 4 that year. The reviewer wrote: "Though Mr Williams eschews some of the cruder simplifications of Marxist analysis and endeavours to do justice to the novels as works of art, yet it is hardly simplifying his argument to say that for him true feeling, true perceptions about community, belong to working people, and novels succeed or fail according to whether they reflect these feelings and these perceptions. Sometimes this involves him in persuading us that there has been a conspiracy of the ruling class against the novelists who maintain this awareness of true community."

### Music

GEORGE MARTIN. *The Opera Companion*. 693pp. John Murray. £8.95. 0 7195 4110 7. Those whose response to an invitation to the opera would be "no no no, EYE" may take heart from George Martin's genial rag-bag of a book, which goes out of its way to make the ingredients of a performance clear and palatable (despite a surprising discussion on castrato), and gives synopses of fifty opera plots. Further accommodation is made in encouraging swingeing cuts (the book being aimed initially at a Met audience for whom *Meisterlinger*, Act 3, could be brought down from a notional 128 to a mere 90 minutes) and in the provision of phonetic guides to key phrases, which would be pointless for home listening and useless in the theatre. Eh neh, chess. SAHR, yo? No, eye'n eye'n tsik vort. And YAHMI.

## INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

- Adams, William Howard. Jefferson's Monticello 922  
 Allison, Alexander W., Herbert Harrows, Caesar R. Blake, Arthur J. Carr, Arthur M. Eastman, and Hubert M. English Jr (Editors). The Norton Anthology of Poetry 911  
 Arnold, Bruce. Margaret Thatcher: A study in power 912  
 Baker, Carlos. The Echoing Green: Romanticism, Modernism, and the phenomena of transference in poetry 925  
 Benz, Wolfgang (Editor). Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 921  
 Chekhov, Anton. The Tales: Volume 1. The Darling and other stories; Volume 2. The Duel and other stories 926  
 Clifton, Robin. The Last Popular Rebellion: The Western Rising of 1685 913  
 Craigie, James and Alexander Law (Editors). Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I 924  
 Davis, Charles T. Dante's Italy and other essays 914  
 De Wit, Wim (Editor). The Amsterdam School: Dutch Expressionist architecture 1915-1930 922  
 Dollimore, Jonathan. Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and power in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries 924  
 Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. The Village of Stepanchikovo 920  
 Eschenburg, Theodor. Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Band 1. Jahre der Besatzung 1945-1949 921  
 Fella, P. S. (Editor). The Oxford English-Russian Dictionary 920  
 Finkels, John. Fundamentals of Ethics 923  
 Frank, Joseph. Dostoevsky: The years of ordeal 1850-1859 920  
 Garrard, John (Editor). The Russian Novel from Pushkin to Pasternak 920  
 Gay, Peter. The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud; Volume 1. Education of the Senses 907  
 Graham, Desmond. The Truth of War: Owen, Blunden and Rosenberg 925  
 Grauer, Neil A. Wits and Sages 908  
 Hook, Judith. Lorenzo de' Medici: An historical biography 914  
 Kern, Montague, Patricia W. Levering, and Ralph B. Levering. The Kennedy Crisis: The press, the presidency, and foreign policy 908  
 McGinnis, Joe. Fatal Vision 915  
 Macmillan, Harold. War Diaries: Politics and war in the Mediterranean, January 1943-May 1945 912  
 Norris, Christopher. The Deconstructive Turn: Essays in the rhetoric of philosophy 923  
 Nuttall, A. D. Pope's Essay on Man 925  
 Olsen, Jack. "Son": A psychopath and his victims 915  
 Pritchett, V. S. The Other Side of the Frontier - A V. S. Pritchett reader. Collected Stories 926  
 Richards, Jeffrey. The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and society in Britain 1930-1939 909  
 Pryn, F. R. E. The Politics of Consent 912  
 Ramsden, John (Editor). Real Old Tory Politics: The political diaries of Robert Sanders. Lord Bayford 1910-1935 912  
 Schwarz, Hans-Peter. Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Bände 2 und 3. Die Ära Adenauer 921  
 Shaw, Valerie. The Short Story - A critical introduction 926  
 Slovic, Michael. Goods and Virtues 923  
 Smith, Larry. Lawrence Ferlinghetti: Poet-at-large 911  
 Spear, Joseph C. Presidents and the Press: The Nixon legacy 908  
 Steininger, Rolf (Editor). Deutsche Geschichte 1945-1961 921  
 Taylor, Laurie. In the Underworld 915  
 Treherne, John. The Strange History of Bonnie and Clyde 915  
 Umphlett, Wiley Lee. The Movies Go to College: Hollywood and the world of the college-life film 910  
 Wheeler, Marcus (Editor). The Oxford Russian-English Dictionary 920  
 Wilson, Elizabeth A. M. The Modern Russian Dictionary for English Speakers: English-Russian 920

The third edition of Derek Goodwin's *Pigeons and Doves of the World* (363pp. British Museum [Natural History] and Cornell University Press. £37.50. 0 8014 1434 2) brings this definitive work up to date. Much new information gathered since 1970 has been added, together with three colour plates of paintings by Robert Gifford illustrating actually or potentially endangered species, some New Guinea fruit doves and geographical variation in rock pigeons.